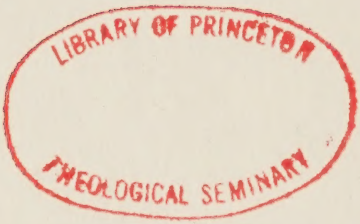

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THE

TRIUMPH OF THE CROSS.

UNWIN BROTHERS, PRINTERS,
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THE

TRIUMPH OF THE CROSS,

BY

JEROME SAVONAROLA.

Translated from the Latin,

WITH NOTES AND A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH,

BY

O'DELL TRAVERS HILL, F.R.G.S.,

Author of "English Monasticism," &c.

London:

HODDER AND STOUGHTON,

27, PATERNOSTER ROW.

MDCCCLXVIII.

PREFACE.

THIS little book was written by its author for the sceptics of his day; but we are convinced that no doubter of our own times could honestly read it through without feeling uneasy about the solidity of some of the foundations of his doubt.

The very conception of such a work as this—a rational defence of Christianity, conducted without appeal to authority or tradition—by a Dominican monk of the middle ages, is in itself a marvel.

But the execution of the work, its rigid adherence to its first principle, its freedom from all sectarian spirit, from all scholastic quibblings, its close consecutive reasoning, its earnestness, convince us that its author was a man far in advance of his age.

In point of style it might have been written yesterday amongst us, and by one of our greatest intellects.

The translator feels justified therefore in bringing this valuable work before the English public for the first time.

He has searched in vain for any trace of an English

translation, and can only find that an abbreviated edition, about one-third of the volume, was brought out in Puritan times, dedicated to the "scoffers and scorners of the Gospel in these days;" an edition long extinct.

This translation has been made from a valuable copy, printed with all the abbreviations peculiar to Savonarola's manuscript, found in the Archives of Sion College.

We repeat that this book is free from all sectarian feeling or prejudice, and is therefore more adapted to the present time, when many questions are mooted whose solution may be found in it by a patient perusal.

It only endeavours to demonstrate those fundamental principles of a true religion, of which an instinctive notion is implanted in the human mind, the basis of its yearning after and its strongest impulse towards a revelation: a demonstration eminently calculated to lead men from the dark wilderness of speculative doubt, to the fuller light of Revealed Truth.

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SAVONAROLA.

1452—1498.

SAVONAROLA was born at Ferrara, 21st September, 1452. His grandfather Michele was body-physician to Nicolo d'Este.

From this old man Savonarola received his first instruction, which, as he was destined to succeed the grandfather, partook of kindred subjects. His father's name was Nicolo, and his mother, Helena, was a daughter of the house of Buonaccorsi, of Mantua. Like nearly all great men, Savonarola had a good and noble mother, and in after years he said that he could never forget her. She was a living influence upon him all his life, and some of his most tender and affectionate letters are those addressed to her.

His first studies under his grandfather, Michele, consisted of grammar, and the elements of Latin. At the age of ten years he was sent to a public school in his native town, with a view to his succeeding his grandfather as a physician. During this period of his youth his favourite studies were

the works of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas, especially the latter. In one of his sermons, delivered in after years (1499), he alludes to his fondness for the great Dominican. "When I was in the world I held him in the greatest reverence. I have always kept to his teaching; and whenever I wish to feel small, I read him, and it happens always that he appears to me a giant, and I to myself a dwarf."

He pursued his medical studies for some time, as we learn from Fra Benedetto, a contemporary biographer; but he was destined for other things.

A dislike for his profession soon manifested itself: his soul was full of higher thoughts. Some of his early poetry, now extant, gives us the best idea of the state of his mind at this period. Most youths are guilty of rhyming, but the early effusions of Savonarola were directed to a strange mistress—the Church. Already in his youth he appreciated the condition of things in the Church of his times. He speaks in these verses of decaying virtue, of the spread of sceptical philosophy, of the head of the Church (Rome) being so prostrated that it might be said it had abandoned its high mission. "Where are the precious stones," he asks, "where the pure diamonds, the bright lamps, the sapphires, the white robes, and white roses of the Church?" He allegorises her as a mother leading him as her son to the altar, weeping and wailing over her griefs, and pointing out to him the destruction of her house.

We trace in these verses the ground tone of Savonarola's future existence. Whilst still in his father's house, a circumstance occurred which altered his whole career. A fair

daughter of the house of Strozzi, in Florence, who was then living in the neighbourhood of Savonarola's house at Ferrara, attracted his attention, and the future monk played, for the first and last time in his life, the part of the lover. He was, however, repelled with such scorn by the haughty young lady, that he retired to his beloved studies, and became more and more contemplative and retired.

His disgust for the world increased, and on St. George the Martyr's day, 23rd April, 1475, in his 23rd year, when all Ferrara was gay with the festival, he secretly left his father's house, wandered to Bologna, and knocked at the door of the Dominican cloister, into which he was received as a novice. His love for St. Thomas Aquinas manifested itself in this choice of the Dominican order.

The anguish of his mother at his unexpected departure was only partially allayed, when a letter came addressed from the monastery to his father.

In this letter Savonarola describes his growing desire for retirement from the world of sin, and the strong impulse he felt in his heart to devote himself and "all his days to my dear Lord Jesus Christ." He consoled his parents by telling them they should be thankful that their son, only twenty-two years old, so loved his Lord as to leave the world for His sake. "Either you love me, or you love me not. If you love me, remember I have two parts, body and soul; which do you love, my body or my soul? You cannot say the body, for then you would not love me rightly; but if you say the soul, why then do you not seek its welfare? Think not that my heart is hardened, that I can part from you.

I have suffered much since I left the world, when I thought of my poor deserted father; and now I beg you, as a brave man, to console my dear mother. Give me, both of you, your blessing, as I shall for ever pray for your souls."

During his residence in this cloister, into which he entered at first only as a lay brother, he devoted his time to his studies. After a year of probation he became a monk, 1476. His principal studies were in natural philosophy and metaphysics; these subjects he taught, as ordered by his superior, but his own private reading was directed to his favourite books, Cassian's Collations, the Lives of the Fathers, Augustine's Meditations, and, above all, the Scriptures, his most favourite study through life.

During the fourteen years he spent in this way, he was frequently sent to different cities in Lombardy to act as a reader, or to preach. In 1486 he was travelling through Lombardy. He appears to have stayed some time at Brescia, where, in 1490, he received orders to preach the Fast at Genoa. In the middle of January he walked on foot to Pavia, and thence to Genoa, where he spent March and April. From this city he returned to Florence.*

From Pavia he wrote a celebrated letter to his mother, too long to quote here.† He told her that, in his love for Jesus, he had been working for Him "in different cities, so that I might not only save my own soul, but the souls of others."

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* Böhringer "Die Kirche Christi und ihre Zeugen oder die Kirchengeschichte in Biographien. Hieron. Savon." Zurich, 1857.

† Böhringer l. c. p. 760, or the English translation of "Villari Vita de Savon."

From his Compendium, we learn that he spent four years of his time at St. Mark's Convent, in Florence, but did not attract much notice; but when he reached the age of thirty-seven years, 1490, he was recalled to Florence, and entered once more the walls of the Convent of St. Mark in that city, destined to be immortalised by being the scene of his future career.

We must here, in a few words, endeavour to trace out the state of things at Florence when Savonarola settled there.

The city of Florence, in the fifteenth century, was one of the wonders of Italy. From a small town, lying obscurely yet beautifully in the valley of the Arno, it had grown into a mighty principality—a principality based upon commerce. Its merchants had accumulated so much wealth that they became lords of the soil, therefore an aristocracy, and out of their number sprung the well-known family of the Di Medici, who became the rulers. At the time of Savonarola, Florence possessed nearly a thousand fortified positions, and the rich lands stretching for miles along the valley of the Arno belonged to her citizens.

Its government was democratical; a splendid palace had been built, called the Palace of the People, in which the popular council of 300 men, consisting of the Signori and Gonfaloniere, assembled with their President, to conduct the affairs of the State.

Florence also was the great banking place of Europe. Kings, Princes, Popes, deposited their wealth in the rich banks of Florence; and amongst the most distinguished bankers at the end of the fourteenth century was Giovanni

di Medici, whose generous use of his wealth won him the favour of the people, and by this means he attained to almost supreme power in the State. His son, Cosmo, carried out his father's plans, and, although no monarchial form was given to the government, yet he was virtually a king. Before attaining this position, however, his enemies had prevailed against him so far as to procure his banishment; but it only tended to increase his power, for he was soon recalled, and entered Florence in triumph. He was a great patron of learning, and helped on the revival of letters just then taking place in Italy. Whatever may be the judgment of history upon the Medici, we must always be grateful to them for their lavish encouragement of learning. Nicoli, a wealthy Florentine, had collected several manuscripts, which he left, with a legacy, to found a public library at St. Mark's; by his instigation, also, Cosmo laid the foundation of that great library from which so many treasures have issued—the Medicean Library of Florence.

In the year 1453, the Turks took Constantinople, and many learned Greeks fled to Italy, some to Florence; the result was that an expedition of savans was sent by the Medici to Greece, to search for MSS. for the new library, and every returning ship laden with the wealth of ancient literature was welcomed as a triumph. During his life, also, an academy was founded in Florence, called the "Platonic Academy," where the band of scholars then living there met and discussed philosophical questions in the true Platonic style and manner. Florence strove to revive Athens. Their speculations are lost, but the work they did

in classical philology, in the reproduction and correction of classical texts, can never be too highly estimated. Cosmo died in 1464, and was succeeded by his son, Pietro, and after his short reign came the well-known Lorenzo di Medici, whose learning, manners, and high culture, gained for him the title of Magnificent. Though his life was spent in luxury and elegance, yet his services to literature were of the greatest importance. Under him the Medicean Library, then called from his name the "Laurentian Library," flourished. He also encouraged Platonic discussions amongst the great scholars, who were engaged by him in the restoration of classical texts. At the Platonic Academy he himself would discuss the great philosophical questions there revived, and so powerful was the impetus given to classical literature, and more especially to the revival of Greek life and history, that Florence became a second Athens, and only wanted the statues of the gods to make it complete. Some fears of this appear to have been entertained; and we hear a solemn but stirring voice coming from the cloister-garden of St. Marks, from Savonarola, the new and strange monk who had settled there—burning words upon the state of things in Florence in 1490.

He began his career as a reader and lecturer, and his lectures, though only intended for novices, drew a large audience. He then lectured in the garden of the cloister, under a large rosebush, where many intellectual men came from the city to hear him. At length he began to preach in the Church of St. Mark's, and his subject was the Apocalypse, out of which he predicted the restoration of the Church

in Italy, which he declared God would bring about by a severe visitation. Its influence upon his hearers was overpowering; there was no room in the church for the brethren; his fame spread abroad, and he was next appointed to preach the sermons in the cathedral. This was really his first public appearance in Florence, and it caused a great sensation. Amid the luxurious, æsthetic, semi-pagan life of Florence, in the ears of the rich citizens, the licentious youth, the learned Platonists, he denounced the revival of paganism, the corruptions of the Church, the ignorance and consequent slavery of the people, and declared that God would visit Italy with some terrible punishment, and *that it would soon come.* He spoke severe words about the priests, declared to the people that the Scriptures were the only guides to salvation; that salvation did not come from external works, as the Church taught, but from faith in Christ, from giving up the heart to Him, and if He forgave sin, there was no need for any other absolution.

Scarcely had he been a year in Florence when he was made prior of the monastery. There was a custom in vogue, a relic of the old times, for every new prior to go to the king or ruler and ask his favour. This homage was then due to Lorenzo di Medici, but Savonarola declared he would never submit to it, saying—"From whom have I received my office, from God or Lorenzo? Let us pray for grace to the Highest."*

Lorenzo passed over this slight, being anxious to acquire

* Burlamacchi "Vita Sav."

the friendship of one whom he clearly saw would exert great influence over the Florentines.

Burlamachi, his contemporary biographer, tells us that Lorenzo tried all kinds of plans to win the friendship of Savonarola: he attended the church of St. Mark; listened to his sermons; gave large sums of money to him for the poor; loitered in the garden to attract his attention—but with little success. Savonarola treated him with respect, gave his money away to the poor, but avoided him and denounced him. Another plan was tried: five distinguished men waited on Savonarola, and begged him to spare such elevated persons in his sermons, to treat more of generalities, and not to foretell the future. They received a prophetic answer. "Go tell your master, Lorenzo, to repent of his sins, or God will punish him and his. Does he threaten me with banishment? Well, I am but a stranger, and he is the first citizen in Florence, but let him know that I shall remain, *and he must soon depart!*"

What happened shortly after caused the people to begin to regard Savonarola as a prophet, and won him that terrible fame which caused his downfall. In April, 1492, Lorenzo the Magnificent lay on his death-bed, at his beautiful villa Careggi, and in his remorse he sent for Savonarola to give him the consolations of religion, and to absolve him from his sins, believing that no other priest's blessing would be so effectual as that of this holy man. According to Pico di Mirandola, Savonarola spoke kindly to Lorenzo, who requested his absolution, but the monk paused for a few moments, and suggested three stipulations: first, that he

must have firm faith in Christ, and God would forgive him. "I believe," said Lorenzo. Then, added Savonarola, as a second condition, that he was to restore what he had unjustly acquired, and Lorenzo replied that he would charge his estate with it. Then came the third stipulation. "Give Florence back her freedom," said Savonarola; but the dying man turned away in silence, and Savonarola departed. Lorenzo died on the 8th April, 1492, and from that time Savonarola becomes more prominent.

He directed his exertions to the accomplishment of three objects—the reformation of his monastery, the reformation of the Florentine State, and the reformation of the Church.

He changed the whole character of his monastery, placed himself at the head of a new company, of which he became the vicar-general, restored the old simplicity of living, ordered all new comers to be enjoined to live purely, to devote themselves to study and preaching. Like a wise reformer, he began with his own house.

Then he proceeded to State matters, and in this step we come to the problem of his life—was he a prophet or a fanatic? Let the facts speak for themselves. Lorenzo was succeeded by his son Pietro, who was vastly inferior to his father in learning and statesmanship. His only idea appears to have been a desire to unite Florence and Naples into one principality; this created for him many enemies, and men began to fancy that the great house of Medici would terminate with him. So, it appears, thought Savonarola, and announced the fact at first privately amongst his friends; in a short time, however, he began to prophecy their downfall

publicly. During the years 1492 and 1494, he was actively engaged in preaching. In Advent of the former year, he began his thirteen sermons upon Noah's Ark. In 1493 he preached the Lent sermons at Bologna, and upon his return he began preaching in the cathedral. In these sermons he predicted the approaching fall of the State to the astonishment of all his hearers, who had not the slightest apprehension of danger: "The Lord has declared that His sword shall come upon the land swiftly and soon." This was the burden of a sermon preached on Advent Sunday, 1492. At the close of 1493, and as the new year approached, he spoke out more plainly and definitely. He declared that one should come over the Alps who was called, like Cyrus, of whom Jeremiah wrote; and he should, sword in hand, wreak vengeance upon the tyrants of Italy. He predicted that their counsels would be turned to their destruction, and he implored those who were religious to spend their time in prayer and meditation, and they would be saved body and soul; but to the wicked he declared that their souls would be scourged with rods out of their bodies, and sent into the eternal fire.

His preaching had always exerted a marvellous influence upon people, as we shall hereafter note, but they could not understand the cause of these predictions. The city was at peace; gay and joyous as usual, and no fear was entertained; but towards the end of the year came the fulfilment. Charles VIII., King of France, called into Italy by Duke Ludovico of Milan, came over the Alps with an immense army, took Naples, and advanced on Florence. The ex-

pulsion of the Medici from Florence soon followed. Pietro, being captured, signed an agreement to deliver up all his strongholds to Charles VIII., and to pay him two hundred thousand ducats. The utmost indignation seized the Florentines when they heard of this treaty. The Signori sent heralds to Charles, to negociate for milder terms, and their chief was Savonarola, who addressed the king like a prophet, begged him to take pity on Italy, and save her. His words had the desired effect. Charles made more easy terms, and left it to the Florentine people to settle their own State.

In the meantime Pietro returned, but he found Florence in the greatest excitement—the royal palace was closed; stones were thrown at him; he summoned his guards, but the people took to arms, and he was compelled to fly to his brothers Giovanni and Giuliano. The Signori declared them to be traitors, and set a price upon their heads. Their palace and its treasures fell into the hands of the people.

The friends of the Medici, however, were not all extinct; and as a discussion arose which was likely to lead to a struggle, Savonarola summoned the people to meet under the dome of St. Mark. When they were assembled, he addressed them upon the future State; he first explained to them the three forms of government—Monarchy, Aristocracy, and Democracy—and suggested the latter as most adapted to the Florentines, whom he designated as the most spiritual, keen-witted, energetic people of Italy. Such a people could not be governed by an alien, even if his rule were just and upright. What he wanted, he said, was not a mere empty popular government, but one of which God should be the

head, and its pillars Christian living and the peace of the citizens. God's own Word was to be its book of laws, and love to Him the soul of the State. Love to God, he said, would produce love to the neighbour, and therefore he trusted that, in the midst of the struggle of parties, they would forget old enmities, and agree together in loving concord, which would make them strong within and safe without.

In fact, the formation of the new State fell upon Savonarola, for the people looked up to him as an inspired prophet. He proposed that 3,200 citizens should form themselves into a general council. Then they drew lots for a third part, who for six months were to act together as an executive body and represent the general council, another one-third for the next three months, and so on; so that every citizen had his turn in the council every eighteen months. They ultimately found it convenient to reduce the number to eighty—in fact, Savonarola's Democracy was rapidly becoming oligarchic. Each of these eighty representatives was to be forty years of age; they voted with black and white beans, six being a legal majority.

But the Chief of the State was to be Christ: He was to be the new monarch.

His next step was to induce them to proclaim a general amnesty, in which he succeeded only through vigorously preaching to them that forgiveness was sweeter than vengeance—that freedom and peace were more loving than strife and hatred. Had it not been for the magic of his eloquence, his great influence over the minds of the people, the streets of Florence would have been deluged with blood.

Whatever we may think of his Theocracy, we must give him this credit—that with an excited populace just freed from tyranny, whom he might have used for the basest purposes, he forgot himself, and only thought of turning their hearts to mercy.

At this time the jealousy of the Franciscans began to manifest itself; they hated him and his popularity; they were afraid that their beloved St. Francis would be eclipsed by St. Dominic, if this zealous monk were not subdued. They began by declaring that a man of God never interferes in worldly matters, but Savonarola cited the example of Moses and the prophets of the Old Testament; they were silenced, but not convinced, for we shall see that ultimately the hatred of the Franciscan for the Dominican was, if not the real cause, one of the principal causes of Savonarola's downfall.

He was now at the height of his power; his voice ruled the State; he is the only instance in Europe of a monk openly heading a republic. The people regarded him as something more than human: they knew of his nights spent in prayer; of his long fasts; of his unbounded charity, that every ducat that came to him—and now they came by thousands—he scattered amongst the poor at once. The influence of his preaching has been graphically sketched by his biographers. When he ascended the pulpit there was a dead silence, and every eye was fixed upon him. He spoke out boldly, and freely denounced the heathenism then prevalent in the State, the growing love of heathen philosophy, and revival of heathen art and literature; he denounced blas-

phemers and tyrants, the sensual youth of the city and their open vice. They tell us that he spoke readily, expressively, and clearly, in a strong musical voice, which could be heard by the most distant listener; that it sounded like a trumpet; his diction was pure and noble, and his physiognomy, when he warmed to his subject, was the "living expression" of what he said. In the heat of his eloquence, when speaking of the Saviour's love and suffering, he would seize the crucifix which lay by his side and kiss it. After the expulsion of the Medici, he caused to be painted over the cross in the chancel, "Jesus Christ, the King of the city of Florence." Few preachers ever exerted such influence upon the minds of crowds, such a vitalizing influence; he changed the whole character of Florentine society. Libertines abandoned their vices; the theatres and taverns were empty; there was no card playing, nor dice throwing; the love of fasting grew so general, that meat could not be sold; the city of Florence was God's city, and its government a Theocracy. There was a custom in Florence, during Carnival time, for the children to go from house to house and bid people give up their cherished pleasures; and so great was the enthusiasm at this period that people gave up their cards, their dice and backgammon boards, the ladies their perfumed waters, veils, paint pots, false hair, musical instruments, harps, lutes, licentious tales, especially those of Boccaccio, dream books, romances, and popular songs. All this booty was gathered together in a heap in the market place, the people assembled, the Signori took their places, and children clothed in white, with olive branches on their heads, received from them the

burning torches, and set fire to the pile amid the blast of trumpets and chant of psalms, which were continued till the whole was consumed.

Education also occupied the attention of Savonarola; he endeavoured to give it an earnest, moral, and religious character, to withdraw the youth of the State from the pursuit of sensuous pleasures. To this end, he charged the mothers, as they valued their own souls, to look after their children; induced the Government to banish from the schools all such poets as Ovid and Catullus, but to retain Homer and Virgil; above all, the Scriptures were to be read. He also preached to the children, and so filled them with his own enthusiasm that they used to draw his face on their books, and run to each other, exclaiming, "This is our brother! see, that is our brother!" He had an especial place made for them in the church, and always watched to see them come in first, when he received them with smiles. Over them, as a superintendent, he appointed his friend Domenico, who organised them into a band, the conditions of membership being to avoid masquerades, theatres, dances, and the reading of frivolous and injurious books, to go to church regularly, to take the sacrament, and keep God's commandments. He did not neglect the poor, he gathered money together for them alone; he preached for them, begged for them from house to house; all money that flowed in to him he divided immediately, and during his life he was the poorest man in Florence. He banished the Jews who extorted money from them, and built three houses of loan where they might borrow money without interest.

His fame had now reached other countries; foreigners visited Florence solely for the purpose of seeing and hearing him. The Sultan of Turkey allowed his sermons to be translated and circulated in his dominions. But in the midst of his prosperity his enemies were not idle: as he progressed their jealousy increased: his preaching displeased them, terrified them, and amongst these the most bitter and virulent were the young sons of the upper classes, they called his followers "howlers" (Piagnoni), and so raged against him that they gained the name, now immortalised in history, of the Arrabiati (the furies): this party was increased by the old friends of the Medici, who called him a rebel and leader of the lower classes. Dolfo Spini, a young man of position and wealth, commanded this party, and used every effort to destroy the reputation of Savonarola, to incite the people against him, and to ruin him. They bore the name of "Compagnacci;" they wrote satires about the Piagnoni; they circulated slanders about the monk who was making Florence the laughing-stock of Europe: but Savonarola went on his way indifferent to the signs already manifesting themselves amongst his countrymen, ever most sensitive to ridicule.

He also strove to reform the Church: he delineated the Apostolic Church as a model upon which he would build up that of Florence. "She was poor," he said, "but beautiful in her poverty: she had no earthly wealth then, nor a number of ceremonies, and none of the vain glories of the present, but was rich in lowliness and love."* He

* In another of his sermons, speaking of the Church in Apostolical times, he said, "In those days they had a golden priest and wooden vessels, but now we have golden vessels and a wooden priest."

attributed the ruin of the Church to the neglect of the Scriptures; through this, he said, they had brought darkness upon themselves, and allowed the prince of darkness to conquer them. They had, therefore, fallen into Judaism, for the Old Testament was full of ceremonies, which had been abrogated by Christ; but in these days, he said, they had added so many commentaries and interpolations of their own to the simple commands of Christ to love God and our neighbour, that they had brought it into the same degenerate condition as the Jews had brought the law of Moses at the time of Christ. "Thus," he exclaimed, "we have wandered from the New Testament to the Old, and the only thing to be done now is to bring the Church back to the New once more."

By this time, the intelligence of his doings, and the gist of his preaching and writing, which had been carefully transmitted to Rome by his enemies, began to attract the attention of the Pope, Alexander VI., who tried what had frequently proved an infallible remedy, and offered Savonarola a Cardinal's hat, which he at once refused. He was then invited to Rome, but thought it prudent to excuse himself. When the controversy between him and the Pope appeared to approach a crisis, Savonarola took a step which somewhat hurried the catastrophe. He wrote to the Kings of France and Spain, and the Emperor of Germany, to call a General Council to take into consideration the Reform of the Church. One of these letters reached the Pope, through a spy of Duke Ludovico Moro, of Milan, whom Savonarola had denounced. The result was the issue of a Breve (October,

1496) which forbad him to preach. The Pope then ordered the Congregation of St. Mark to be broken up and amalgamated with another. For a time Savonarola, at the advice of his friends, remained quiet; but at this last step, to break up the institution he had established, he was aroused to action. He denounced Rome as the source of all the poison which was undermining the constitution of the Church; declared that its evil fame stunk in men's nostrils. The Pope then applied to the Signori to deliver up this enemy of the Church, but to no purpose. The Franciscans were ordered to preach against him, but they made no impression. Then came the last thunderbolt: a Bann was issued (12th May, 1497,) which was announced by the Franciscans. During the time of his suspension and his excommunication, many things happened which tended to his downfall, although his friends gathered round him: the rapid change of ministry brought in turn friends of the Medici to the helm; they introduced the young Compagnacci into the Council, and gradually his enemies were increasing in the Government to a strong party.

One of the reproaches made against him by this party was his friendship with Charles VIII., of France, who had promised to do much for Florence, but had done nothing but weaken her. Pietro di Medici made an effort to enter Florence, but the influence of Savonarola was still strong enough to prevent him. Other circumstances happened which encouraged his enemies to denounce him as a traitor, and a conspiracy was formed amongst the friends of the Medici, at whose head was Bernardo del Nero, an old man

of seventy-five; their object was to recall the exiled family. His enemies broke out with more fury; nothing could restrain the Arrabiati; they broke into the church, tore down the inscription he had placed over the cross, and substituted the head of an ass. When he was preaching the morning service on Psalm vii., about the Power of Faith, they raised a tumult in the church; one of the Arrabiati broke off an almsbox and threw it in the air as a signal, when a rush was made at Savonarola. A general struggle ensued, the monks closed round Savonarola, and carried him through his enemies in triumph to St. Mark, shouting "Long live Christ our King."

Another unfortunate circumstance was the approach of the Pest, then raging in Italy; it attacked Florence; the people looked to their prophet, and, like the Jews, cried out for a miracle. "Do not fear," he said; "cast not away your trust in God; it is His proving time; arouse yourselves, and help your sick brethren." But the people died, and poverty followed the Pest; no miracle was wrought, and many began to waver in their faith, and to fall off from Savonarola.

His enemies seized the opportunity with avidity; they declared they were the friends of the Church, fighting under the Pope's authority, and to defend his right against the aggressor; that their cause was a sacred one, and to help them Alexander threatened the whole city with an Interdict.

At this crisis one of the most extraordinary instances of fanaticism arose which, though brought about by the zeal of

his friends, hurried his fate. One of his strongest supporters, Domenico da Pescia, a member of the Dominican order, opened a controversy with a Franciscan about the work of Savonarola. The enmity of the Franciscans was aroused—it became a party cry; the two orders were pitted against each other; the honour of each was involved in the dispute, and, in the heat of the debate, the Franciscans suggested the settlement of the controversy by a fiery ordeal. Domenico eagerly accepted the challenge—"Rather an angel fall from heaven than Savonarola lie," he cried. When the news of this terrible proposition was brought to Savonarola, he at once expressed his displeasure, and decided against it; but it was too late—the enthusiasm of the people was enkindled: they cried out for the proof—St. Francis against St. Dominic; and the proof, in spite of all Savonarola's remonstrances, was decided upon.* The champions were, Domenico for Savonarola, and Giuliano Rondinelli for the Franciscans.

The 7th of April, 1498, was fixed for this most extraordinary scene, which can scarcely be equalled in the whole history of human enthusiasm. In the Market-place of Florence two scaffolds were erected, of forty feet in length, each being saturated with oil and pitch. Between the two scaffolds was a narrow passage, and the monks were to walk through after the whole mass had been ignited, the survivor to be pronounced the victor.

The scaffolds were surrounded by soldiers, all the Signori were present, the roofs of the houses were crowded with

* Quetif II. 451-510. Pico di Mirand, p. 64. Burlam, p. 108.

people, and various speculations were made as to the result.

At length the brethren of St. Mark appeared, marching in procession, singing the 68th Psalm, with Savonarola at their head. The Franciscan champion had not appeared, but Domenico, who was eager to enter the fire, stood ready. A suggestion was made by the director of the ordeal, Pietro degli Alberti, who was an enemy of Savonarola, that Domenico should take off the robe of his order, as it might have been enchanted by Savonarola. When he had changed his dress, then they demanded that he should lay aside the crucifix, which he did, and said that he should like to carry the Host instead; but the Franciscans objected, lest it should be destroyed; a controversy ensued, which resulted in the decision that the Host would not be destroyed, though the friar would be burned up entirely.

During this theological combat, which was raised by the Franciscans to gain time, as their champion had not yet appeared, an order was suddenly issued by the Signori that the ordeal should not take place, and a sudden shower of rain separated the parties.

Upon this, Savonarola demanded an escort, for when the people heard that there was to be no ordeal, they turned upon him, and accused him as the cause of their disappointment; they expected him to insist upon the trial, and awaited some miracle on his part to crush his enemies, so that their disappointment was the greater, and they followed the escort, shouting and reproaching him as a false prophet. "Scoundrel, throw away the Sacrament," they cried; but

Savonarola retained it firmly, and it was only by doing so that they were prevented from attacking him.

The next morning Savonarola preached a short sermon at St. Mark, at the conclusion of which he presented himself to God as an offering, and declared that he was ready to die for his sheep. In the evening, at vespers, the strife broke out; the Compagnacci marched to the church, and began the attack at first by throwing stones inside; upon this the gates were closed, and those who were inside, including with the monks many citizens who had come to the service, debated as to what was best to do. Domenico da Pescia, the friend of Savonarola, who in fact had begun the fatal controversy with the Franciscans, suggested that they should defend themselves and meet violence with violence; but Savonarola refused, and replied, "My son, take the cross, not arms; that is my will." They then joined in prayer together.

But outside the church the tumult increased; night came on, and an order was issued by the Signori that all the laity should leave the church within an hour, that no citizen should join the strife, that the brethren should lay down their arms, and that Savonarola should be banished from Florence, which he should leave within twelve hours. Some of the citizens availed themselves of the safe conduct offered to them, and left the church; others, however, decided upon remaining to defend it. The strife went on until midnight, when a band of men was sent from the Signori, demanding the presence of Savonarola, Domenico da Pescia, and another follower, Sylvester Maruffi, before

their bar. Savonarola delivered himself up at once, embraced his brethren, and bid them farewell; a strong band of soldiers was left behind to protect the convent and monks, and Savonarola was escorted from the church with his hands tied behind him. It was midnight when the strong escort issued from the church with their victim, they were accompanied by persons carrying torches, lanterns, and arms. A raging mob closed around them, and raised a shout of execration. Benedetto says, "I know not whether hell itself could raise such a cry as arose that night when they took him before the Signori. I wanted to follow him to go with him, but the raging crowd drove me back, and so I stood alone in the street, and was compelled to see how they illused the shepherd of my soul."

So great was the violence of the crowd that those who escorted Savonarola were compelled to fight their way through. The Compagnacci pressed through them, and struck and kicked Savonarola several times, saying, "Prophesy who struck thee." At length they managed to reach the palace, when, as he passed through the narrow gate, he received one more severe kick behind, and a cry followed him, "That is the seat of thy prophesying."*

The Signori at once sent a courier to Rome with the news of the capture of Savonarola. The Pope replied by issuing four Breves, in which he congratulated the Signori upon their success, granted absolution to all who were slain in the fighting, and sent the permission they had begged of him to submit their victim to torture.

* Burlamacchi.

The Signori then demanded of Savonarola a recantation of all he had taught and preached, and a declaration that he was a false prophet. As he refused, they stretched him seven times during the week upon the rack; and Savonarola, who was of slender frame, in the height of sufferings, cried out, "Lord, take my spirit!" and at last, when worn out by suffering, he agreed to confess, and did so; but as soon as he had rested he withdrew his recantation, declared it was of no avail, as it was wrung from him by torture, and confirmed all he had taught or preached.

On the 17th of April they finished their investigation, and Savonarola was relieved of his tortures, not before one of his arms had been nearly torn from his body.

Not only was Florence against him—the city which had so flattered him, for whom he had laboured, and to whom he had given freedom—but his own cloister brethren began to think of their safety. Their master was in prison; he, and they through him, were excommunicated; popular feeling was against them, and they decided at once upon deserting their chief and offering their submission to the Pope. On the 21st of April they sent a letter of apology to Rome, deprecating all their master had done, and begging his Holiness to appoint a proctor over them, to grant them absolution, and receive them back into the Church. By the 14th of May they received a reply from the Pope, announcing the glad tidings that the general of their order should pronounce their absolution on his next visit to Florence.

We have no means of ascertaining whether Savonarola

had any knowledge of this desertion. During the time between his trial and his execution he employed himself in writing his celebrated exposition of the Miserere (Psalm li.), which begins, "O, wretched man that I am, deprived of all help, who have offended both heaven and earth! Where shall I escape to? Where turn myself? To whom shall I flee? Who will take mercy upon me? To thee, thou true God, do I turn in my mourning and sorrow, for Thou alone art my hope. Thou art mercy itself, but what am I but misery and wretchedness. The abyss of my misery calleth to the abyss of Thy mercy, and as the one is greater than the other, may Thy mercy absorb my misery! Have mercy upon me, O Lord, according to Thy loving-kindness, according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies, not according to the mercy of men, which is small, but according to Thy mercy, which is immeasurable, inconceivable, boundless, and which surpasses all sin! Have mercy upon me, O God, not according to Thy smaller mercy, for small is Thy mercy when Thou relievest man from bodily suffering, but great is Thy mercy when Thou forgivest sins, and by Thy grace raisest him up from the depths of the world. *Justify me, O God, by Thy grace, for by his own merit and works can no man be justified.* I have become wretched and humbled, do thou strengthen me, O Lord, with Thy Holy Spirit, that in the excess of my terror and torment I may not desert Christ."

This beautiful Commentary, after the death of Savonarola, ran through thirteen editions, and was widely read. Its fame was still more increased when Luther brought out an

edition of it in Germany, with a preface, in which he confesses that Savonarola had been the precursor of his doctrine. "Although," he says, "some theological mud still adhered to the feet of that holy man he nevertheless maintained justification by faith alone, and he was burned by the Pope. But lo! he lives in blessedness, and Christ has canonised him."*

On the 22nd of May, 1498, it was announced to the three prisoners, Savonarola, Domenico, and Maruffi, that they were to be executed early the next morning. Savonarola received the announcement peacefully, and with resignation. So also did Domenico, but Maruffi was very much depressed. Domenico asked what mode of death was to be adopted, and when he was informed that they would be led out to the place of execution, and there be first hanged and then burnt, he demanded to be burnt alive. In the evening Savonarola expressed a wish to see his companions for one hour; it was granted: they were led out of their cells, with chains round their feet, and brought together in a room in the palace. Savonarola gave proofs of the greatest resignation. To Domenico, who longed for the fire, he said, "Knowest thou not that it is not permitted to a man to choose the mode of his own death, but it is our duty only to take with joy the death which God may provide for us. Who knows if thou couldst undergo the death thou desirest, which depends not upon our strength but the grace of God: man should never tempt God." In a similar manner he reproved

* Cited in Villari "Vita di Savon." Lib. iv. cap. 10.

Maruffi, who was anxious to declare his innocence before the people previous to his execution. "Thou shouldst keep thy peace like Christ, who, though innocent, yet would not declare his innocence even on the cross."

Both submitted, kneeled at his feet, and implored his blessing.

As soon as the morning of the 23rd dawned, the three, after they had partaken of the Sacrament, which had been first taken by Savonarola, and then by him administered to his brethren, were led out of the prison, and conveyed to the place of execution. When they had descended the great steps of the palace, Savonarola spoke a few words of encouragement and consolation to Maruffi. "We shall soon be there where we can sing with David—'Behold how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.'" Then they were stripped of all their clothes, even to their woollen shirt, and were compelled to put on ecclesiastical vestments, of which they were afterwards to be deprived publicly.

There were three tribunals erected in the square. On the first, next the door of the palace, stood the bishop of Vasona, with his attendants, who had to carry out the ecclesiastical degradation according to the Pope's command. On the second were the papal commissioners; on the third were the chosen eight of the guard.

The condemned were taken to the first tribunal, where, according to custom, they were deprived of all their priestly decorations, during which ceremony, the bishop taking Savonarola by the hand, said, "Thus I exclude thee from

the militant and triumphant Church." "From the Church militant thou mayst," exclaimed Savonarola, in a loud, firm voice, "but from the Church triumphant thou canst not."*

They were then led to the second tribunal, where the papal emissaries read the sentence to them, which condemned them as heretics, schismatics, and contemners of the holy chair, and ordered them to be delivered up to the secular arm. Before going to the third tribunal the assistants begged Savonarola to eat and drink something to strengthen him, but he merely replied, "Wherefore since I am now to depart this life?" Another told him not to doubt, but to trust to the many good works he had done, and he replied, "A sinful man has no need of earthly praise and honour—there is no time in this life for glory." A third asked him if he would die firmly and peacefully. "My Saviour," he replied, "though innocent, willingly died for my sins, and should I not willingly give up this poor body out of love to Him?"

At the third tribunal the sentence of death was read to them, and they were then handed over to the hangman. The scaffold was erected in the middle of the square, at the height of a man. In its midst was raised a stake, twenty ells high, with a cross-beam ; beneath it were all the materials for burning. As the brethren mounted the scaffold evil boys pricked them through the crevices with pointed sticks. At the foot of the gallows they all kneeled, each one before his crucifix. Maruffi first mounted the ladder

* Burlamacchi "Pico di Mirand and Benedetto."

in silence, though, according to Nardi, he was heard to mutter, "Lord, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." He was at once despatched.

Domenico followed, and was hanged on the other side of the cross-beam, and then followed Savonarola, who had seen the execution of both. The middle was reserved for him. He still prayed for faith as he mounted, and then, says Burlamacchi, he opened his eyes, and took a last look at the immense mass of people—the ungrateful people under him. "Now is the time, O Savonarola," they cried, "for a miracle." The hangman jibed at him as he fulfilled his office, but Savonarola made no reply. In his last moments his hand was seen raised, as if to bless the people.

The fire was kindled, and soon mounted fiercely, but a strong wind setting in blew the flames away from the bodies, so that for a long time they remained unconsumed. This struck terror into the people, who ceased mocking, and fled, regarding this circumstance as the miracle they had demanded.

So terminated the life of this remarkable man. Nearly four hundred years have passed away, and Italy is at last arousing herself to commemorate his death.

We have carefully avoided in this brief sketch of his life any attempt to prove that he was a herald of Protestantism. Though Luther admitted that he taught, as he certainly did, the doctrine of Justification by Faith; and though he decried the abuses which were then prevalent in the Church, yet he was true to that Church itself; he believed in the efficacy of praying to saints; held relics in high estimation; and

declared that Christ Himself had ordered that His mother should be worshipped. So that the effort made by some of the German biographers, more especially Meyer, who artistically concocts a complete system of Protestant dogmatics from his works appears to be injudicious; and we must come to the only reasonable conclusion, that though he is now claimed both by Catholics and Protestants, he lived and died in that Church in which he was reared, and which he would not have destroyed but purified.

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The Triumph of the Cross.

BOOK I.

INTRODUCTION.

I UNDERTAKE to defend the glorious triumph of the Cross against the impious volubility of the sophists and wise men of the world. The enterprise is bold and beyond my strength, but I hope God will aid me in a work, in these days, so useful to His glory; for although it may seem superfluous to reproduce the proofs of the faith so happily founded and established by the innumerable miracles of our Lord, by the literary monuments of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, yet many men are so deeply plunged in the mire of vice that they do not see the light of truth, that they regard heavenly things as ridiculous, and despise Divine marvels as absurd dreams. We, inflamed by zeal for the house of God, will exert ourselves to rouse these souls slumbering in the shadow of death, and recall to their memory the authentic deeds of the past.

Although it may not be possible to demonstrate the faith

by the causes and principles of nature, however, its manifested effects will furnish us with proofs so solid that every sensible man will be compelled to admit them.

But the faith does not depend upon proofs; for, says the Apostle, faith is a gift which God bestows on man through grace alone, lest any one should boast. We will, therefore, only bring forward these proofs to confirm those who hesitate, and to dispose them to receive the supernatural gift of faith, and at the same time to arm the faithful against the assaults of impiety, and to prevent the impious from undertaking anything against souls so simple whom it would be wicked to deceive. And as to what is said that faith has no merit when it is demonstrated by human reason, it does not follow that we here derogate from the mystery of grace, for this adage only refers to men who to believe will be vanquished by the arms of reason alone; but those are to be praised who by virtue of the Divine gift, having already embraced the faith of Jesus Christ, still seek for solid reasons to assure themselves in it, and to confirm their brethren.

The prince of apostles exhorts to do this when he says, "Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope which is in you."

Therefore, as we wish in this book to proceed only by reasonings, we shall invoke no authority, but act as if it were only necessary to believe our own reason and experience; for all men are compelled, under pain of folly, to consent to natural reason.

As we address ourselves to the learned of the times, who generally disdain familiar language destitute of ornament, we shall on their account abandon for a little our usual simplicity.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE MODE OF PROCEEDING IN THIS WORK.

IT is necessary that we should attain to the knowledge of invisible things by means of visible, for all our knowledge commences with the senses, and the senses only apprehend external accidents; but the intellect by its subtlety penetrates to the very substance of things, whence it elevates itself to the knowledge of that which is immaterial and invisible: for while man seeks the substance and propriety, order, causes, and movement of visible things, he is led by induction to the knowledge of invisible things, and even raises himself to God; so that by the accidents, the movements, and the exterior operations of man we arrive at a knowledge of our own soul. This is the reason why the philosophers in contemplating the universe, that is the heavens, their ornaments and the influence of the stars, the properties, action, and mixture of elements, the varieties, the movements, and the passions of composite beings, and in fine, the admirable order, the grandeur, and the beauty of this visible world, elevated their regard still higher to seek invisible things; and, having found them, they endeavoured to penetrate into their nature and properties; and now as they have learnt that nature is the work of God, and that through the creation we may arrive at a knowledge of

the power and glory of a Creator—so we wish to show that the works which the Church has done, and which are perceived by the senses and reason, are Divine works, and that by them we can learn the majesty and glory of the invisible Jesus Christ. Also as these philosophers have collected and put before our eyes all the things which God has created in the universe, we must present in a tableau all that Christ has done in the world; and as the philosophers were constrained by the marvels of nature to recognise that God is the first cause of all created beings, and that nature is the work of an infallible intelligence, that is a Divine—so do we find from the admirable works of the Church that the same Jesus Christ crucified is the first cause of these works, and that His operations are the operations of a God who cannot be deceived.

However, we do not say that our faith is born out of these reasons so proposed, and that the Christian soul is impelled towards belief by the virtue of argumentation, for then faith would be no more than human opinion; but we believe, thanks to the power of that light which God has supernaturally infused into us, and reason only serves to confirm that belief, that to preserve this Divine gift is not idleness, but gravity and wisdom.

In order to present to the eyes of men a grand synthesis of the works of the Church in the present and the past, we describe them under the figure of a triumphal chariot, having some kind of similitude with the universe.

CHAPTER II.

CONCERNING THE TRIUMPH OF THE CROSS—WHENCE THE PROOFS OF THE FAITH ARE DRAWN.

AS the power, the wisdom, and the goodness of God are infinite, the contemplation of a single creature can only give us an imperfect idea of Him. So the philosophers arrived at a knowledge of God through contemplating the order of the universe; but this order results not from one thing, but from innumerable things, which they could easily embrace at one view, since all beings in creation are dependent upon one another, and are united together by a natural tie. In the same manner, an isolated view of one of the works of Jesus Christ cannot give us instantly the intelligence of His virtue and wisdom, but if we offer to view all His works at once, and the effects they have produced, to draw not one proof but many, every intellect will be compelled to recognise that the Christ crucified is the true God; for if a single proof will not suffice, all the proofs united will have the power to convince every man who is not foolishly obstinate.

But because the past and present works of Christ do not offer themselves easily to the view, like objects of nature, which are linked together in admirable order under the vault of heaven, it has seemed good to present them under

the image of a triumphant chariot, in order to render them palpable to the most vulgar mind, and that we may contemplate them not only one after another, but in their harmonious whole.

Let us represent to ourselves, first, a chariot with four wheels, and upon this chariot Christ borne in triumph, crowned with thorns, and showing, after having conquered the pains of death, the sacred wounds of his pale and bleeding body: the arms, with which he has subdued the world and led captivity captive. Let there shine on his head a triple sun, representing the Holy Trinity: let that radiant globe shed an ineffable splendour over Christ and His Church: let Christ bear in His left hand His cross and all the instruments of His passion, and press with His right hand the books of the Old and New Testament. Let the apostles and preachers march immediately before the chariot, as if they were drawing it, preceded by patriarchs, prophets, and an innumerable crowd of Old Testament saints: let a crowd also of martyrs, of all conditions and of both sexes, surround that triumphal chariot, and around them all the holy doctors with their books open in their hands, followed by an immense number of every rank and nation—Jews, Greeks, Latins, barbarians, learned and ignorant, of every age, applauding the triumph of Christ. And outside this triumphal band let there be seen the enemies of Christ, who with all their strength persecute the Church: the emperors, kings, princes, and the mighty of this age: the sages, the philosophers, the heretics, and the wicked of all nations and tongues, slaves and free, men and women; and near this crowd let there be

the relics and idols of the gods reversed and destroyed; the heretical books delivered up to the flames, their impious dogmas confounded, and their false worship reduced to nothing.

This chariot thus represented before us will be, so to speak, a universe whence we shall draw a new philosophy.

For the first cause, and for things invisible, to the knowledge of which the philosophers were compelled to attain by means of visible things, we place, in fact, upon the head of Christ the radiant globe which represents the Trinity, which we confess to be the sovereign God and the Christ (invisible to us) dominating over the whole, and surrounded by the homage of a chorus of angels and saints.

All these visible beings whom we have placed on the chariot and about the chariot, will conduct us to the knowlege and the science of these invisible beings.

And just as the philosophers establish, after God, the heavens as the principal generating cause of all, we will place, after God, the Cross and the suffering of Christ as principal cause of the grace bestowed on the Church and of our salvation. After the heavens come the elements (of nature), and that is why after the Cross and suffering come the sacraments of the Church. And in the same manner as the elements draw all their virtue from heaven, *so the sacraments draw all their virtue from the suffering of Christ.* After the elementary principles in the constitution of the universe, come all the seeds, all the germs, and all the particular agents of propagation; and so, in the same manner, in our Triumph of the Cross, we place as seed the evangelical teaching and the example of the holy. As to

particular agents, they are apostles, patriarchs, martyrs, and doctors, who during their lives have, in Christ, regenerated the whole universe, and by whose merits and example the Church becomes daily fecund in renowned and fruitful works. Then in this material world come the effects which in our work are represented by that immense multitude of men, of every condition, converted to Christ by the example and exhortation of holy men whose lives have been pious and pure.

Seeing that in Nature every movement passes from one contrary to another, so that the generation of one being is but the corruption of another, and that in every act of generation, opposing principles are necessary with the triumph of the stronger principle over the weaker,* therefore we have placed around our chariot all the enemies of Christ and the Church, and we have represented the Christ as a valiant captain, triumphant over His enemies, and putting them and their errors to flight. Also, as the philosophers, having the universe before their eyes, and considering its phenomena, have been ravished with admiration, and seized with an ardour to know, and have arrived step by step from effects to the cause, from inferior things to superior, and, in fine, have attained to the notion even of invisible natures, and of the majesty of God—so also we arrive gradually to a knowledge of the Divinity of Christ, and of the invisible marvels which are in Him, by carefully studying His symbolical image, and the triumph of His past and present effects and all their causes.

* Aristot. "De Generat. et Corrupt."

CHAPTER III.

UNIVERSALLY ADMITTED PRINCIPLES.*

TO proceed with order in our reasoning, it is necessary to know that those who discuss ought always to be agreed upon certain points. Without that mutual accord, discussion would be impossible. Now the points upon which those who discuss accord, are those things which all men recognise and admit as true, or those things whose truth is attested by the testimony of the senses, by induction, or those to which we adhere at once by virtue of our internal light and active intelligence. It is necessary then to admit, as the base of our reasoning, certain principles constantly and universally recognised and admitted. For if these principles be denied, we cannot enter upon any discussion, because we cannot discuss with those who *deny principles*.

When the physicist pre-supposes a moving principle, he could not enter into discussion with anyone who, like Zeno, would deny all movement. Let it then at once be granted that Jesus Christ was crucified by the Jews, and that He is recognised and adored as a God by the greater portion of all nations. That is a fact admitted not only by Christians

* See a chapter in "Delitzsch Biblical Psychology" on the "*Everlasting Postulates*," "System der Biblischen Psychologie." Leipzic, 1866. And Clark "Theol. Lib." for translation.

but even by infidels. It is a fact confessed from generation to generation by heretics, Jews, Mahomedans—proclaimed in all the languages of the Gentiles and barbarians, and confirmed by all the books which are published in great numbers upon Christ and His Church.

There is scarcely any region in the world where one will not meet some monument of Christian Churches, and one will scarcely find any place in the universe where Jesus Christ is not already or has not been formerly adored; or, at least, where they do not know that He is adored by the Christians as a true God, just as even the infidels call Him "*the God of the Christians.*"

It would then be a folly to deny this fact, which the constant tradition of word, writings, and monuments attests.

It is recognised also that the apostles have preached the Cross, and that before them the prophets and patriarchs of the Hebrew people, as afterwards the martyrs and holy doctors of the Church, and an infinite multitude of monks, confessors, clerks, religious and secular men, have invariably confessed Jesus Christ.

Equally notorious is it that tyrants, philosophers, orators, and the wicked in great number, have waged against the Church and Faith a cruel and bloody warfare: it is not the less certain that since the preaching of the Cross, idols have been overturned and the errors of the world vanquished and dissipated;* that the Roman Emperors bowed their heads

* On the Fall of Paganism, see Tzschirner "Fall des Heidenthums." In the West—Beignot "Histoire de la Destruction du Paganisme en Occident." In the East—Chastel "Histoire de la Destruction du Paganisme en Orient."

to the authority of the Galilean fishermen; and that an innumerable army of heretics, with their books and other impious dogmas, have been reduced to non-entity.

All these facts, and others similar to them, which will present themselves to us in this treatise, need not be demonstrated. We shall admit them as true and indubitable, just as we admit the existence of natural objects which we see with our eyes, and first principles which have no need of being proved, because they are immediately perceived by the light of reason, and dominate in us constantly. We therefore reason in this way: a man of sound mind cannot deny what is evident to all. Now, not only Christian people who occupy a considerable portion of the globe, but a great part of other people, although they may be in error, hold as unquestionable all that we have said, and accord to the principal number of these facts their veneration. The Mahomedans, who are a numerous people, and amongst whom exist certain proofs in favour of our faith, attest firmly that the Christ has reigned amongst them, and that He performed great miracles; and not only do they not blaspheme, but venerate Him; so that if it be the mark of a fool to deny what is evident, what we, so to speak, may touch with the finger, it is no less insensate to deny the facts which we have alleged; for it would be necessary in such case to flee from all truth, and resist foolishly and imprudently the light of evidence.

CHAPTER IV.

REPLY TO OBJECTIONS AGAINST THE FOREGOING PRECEDENTS.

IT will perhaps be objected—If these things be true, how is it that no pagan historian has mentioned them in his works? Is it not astonishing that all these writers, who have carefully described the wars of kings and the actions of great men, have entirely omitted the work of Christ—the grandest, most admirable, and most celebrated in the universe?

But the fact has been confirmed by the greater number of the contradictors, and their attacks have rather proved than refuted it, so that we shall reply to this that it is false to say that no pagan writer has celebrated the works of Christ. On the contrary, the wisest and most grave of them, after having seriously studied and examined into those works, have become converted to the Christian faith, and have defended it in their books of an innumerable number now scattered over the world.* If any one should object to this, that these books were written after their conversion, and therefore are open to suspicion, we point out that the very fact of their conversion attests the truth of our faith, since

* Amongst the noted pagan converts were Clemens Alexand.; Cyprian, of Carthage; Dionysius, of Alexandria; Gregory Thaumaturgus; Hilary: Justyn Martyr; Minucius Felix; Tertullian.

not only did they celebrate in their writings the praises and the works of Jesus Christ and His Church, but quitting their idols they pressed forward to follow their Divine Saviour, and shed their blood for their love of Him. For it is not only Christians, nourished in the faith from their cradles, who have defended the Christian truth, but a great number of men, wise and illustrious, of different nations, who embraced it in the maturity of their age. If the unbelieving and proud, who saw the miracles of Christ without receiving the faith, did not take the trouble to write on the works of Christ, but strove to destroy the memory of our Divine Saviour, what is there to be astonished at in it? But those who, converted to baptism, have served and defended the faith by their preaching, their writings, and their good works, and have suffered for it the most horrible tortures, have given a much greater impetus to the truth than they would have done had they, while remaining in paganism, written thousands of books upon it. Besides, I find a double cause of silence—namely, the providence of God and the blindness of man; for we believe that God imparts all movement to spiritual as well as corporeal things, and that He governs all by His providence, as we shall presently prove. It is because no one could be moved to write unless God moves him, *seeing that the second cause can do nothing unless moved by the first.* Then to this first question, why God did not move the writers of paganism to describe the works of Christ and His disciples, I reply, because God, doing everything in order, uses means suitable to the production of His works. Now the works of Christ and the Church are pure

and Divine (as we shall presently prove), and the pagans were profane and impious; so that it was not suitable that God should make use of them to write His works. And, besides, Christ being the truth, and His mission in the world having for its end to render testimony to the truth, it would not have been suitable that men—licentious, full of lies, such as the poets and orators of the Gentiles—should touch that immaculate truth—they who in their verses and their discourse offer to their princes false praise, and sometimes elevate to the skies the most unworthy men. They would have filled their books with falsehood, and corrupted with impurity the source of truth.

As to the Gentile orators, they used a purely natural eloquence, and had for an object rather the glory of speech than the triumph of truth. Now the works of Christ being supernatural, as we shall prove, it was not fitting that such men, whose intellects were guided only by natural light, should treat on questions above that light.

That was the result of their blindness. Sin, in fact, renders men blind. The pagans, whose hearts were filled with sin, inflated with pride and vain glory, therefore dark and insensate, could in no way comprehend the grandeur of God; they remarked neither the miracles by which sight was restored to the blind, and life to the dead, neither the other prodigies of Christ; or, if they did remark them, they thought nothing of them. This is the reason why they did not consign them to their writings, but despised them as deeds of superstition.

The Christians, detesting the worship of idols, and en-

deavouring to persuade princes and peoples to abolish them, incurred the hatred of the poets and orators, who from their infancy applied their intellect to the praises of these false gods, and to enlarge upon their fables. These poets feared they should lose their credit and the fruit of their labours, therefore they made themselves agreeable to the tyrants who often persecuted the Christians. That is another reason why they have said nothing of the wonderful works of Christ, or have turned them into ridicule.

In fine, the orators and poets, and all the wise men of that time, employed their energies in flattering the princes and men in authority, to procure benefits and gifts from them ; they elevated them, and, to debase their enemies, they did not hesitate to employ falsehood ; but these impious means would have procured them neither credit nor riches among the Christians, who were lovers of truth and poverty. Let no one, then, be astonished at the silence which such men have maintained about the works of Christ. When the Church, however, came into possession of a temporal empire, there was no want of writers eager to celebrate in their works, often with falsehood, the praises of princes and prelates. Now truth has no need of such defenders ; it is therefore more fortunate that unworthy authors and frivolous witnesses like these have left the Christian truth intact, and not meddled with it.

CHAPTER V.

METHOD OF PROCEDURE.

AS, therefore, the invisible things of God are known by the visible,* we must understand that there are certain invisible things of God which can be apprehended by his visible works, through the means of the natural virtue and force of the human understanding. To this consciousness even the philosophers attained, who admitted that there was a God, that there was only one God, and that He existed independent of all conditions, and other similar truths. But it is also necessary to know that there are certain invisible things of God which cannot be brought out nor found by any process of human reason; and certainly no one will doubt that there are in God infinite secrets and knowledge, which surpass human reason, especially when we perceive amongst men, who by nature are equal (the great philosophers), that they comprehend certain subtle truths, to the knowledge of which the intellect of the ignorant cannot attain. Now God being infinitely superior to men, there are necessarily in Him secrets which no created reason can penetrate or sound; and as in things of sense, in which we are daily experimenting our ignorance of a great number of

* Peter Lombard.—"Sentent," lib. I., dist. 1, c. 2—10.

their properties, convinces us of the imperfection of our science, how much more palpable then should our imperfection be to us, when the question is about God, since visible effects which lead up to Him are not only in equal accordance with the first cause, but infinitely removed from it.

Therefore we call those truths superhuman which we know only by faith, such as the Triune God, that God became man, and other similar truths, incognisable by natural effects or mere reason.

Also, we may make ourselves more certain of these things by the supernatural effects of faith, for in the same manner as the observation of natural effects leads us to certain knowledge of God, and enables us to apprehend the truth of such propositions as that God exists, that He is One and Infinite, without enabling us to know Him as He is, nor to demonstrate to us His substance, so by observation of supernatural effects, we shall become more certain of such propositions that God is Triune, the Son of God is man, without being able at the same time to comprehend what in itself is the Trinity or the Incarnation.

Now, inasmuch as grace always presupposes nature, we shall treat in the first place of the invisible things of God which can be investigated and known by means of natural effects, and we shall treat in the second place of those which are in a manner perceived by the means of supernatural effects. And we shall treat of the first summarily, because the philosophers and learned Christian doctors have written so profusely upon the subject, that there can be no room for doubt.

CHAPTER VI.

THAT THERE IS A GOD.

IT is then first necessary to prove that there is a God. But as it is also necessary to conform to the common usage in the name we apply to things, and as here we have to name the subject of which we are about to treat, the first question is to ascertain what men understand by the word God.

Now it is certain that all understand by that appellation something sovereignly excellent, which some call the Prime Mover, others the First Cause, and the First Principle, and others the Supreme Good and the First Truth. Granted, then, that we understand by the word God the Prime Mover, the First Cause, First Principle, Supreme Good, or First Truth, or any other term, it is manifest that, even by the demonstrations of the philosophers, we are compelled to confess the existence of God. We shall present in an abridged form, according to the order we have established in this treatise, some of these demonstrations.

I. We perceive, by means of the senses, that in this world there are certain things in motion. Now everything that moves is necessarily moved by another, nothing being at the same time under the same relation in actuality and potentiality; but it is impossible to mount from the finite to the

infinite, from the being which is in motion to him who moves it, because if so there would be no intermediate movers receiving their motion from the first; necessarily, then, we arrive at a First Mover, and this First Mover we call God.

II. The argument is the same for the Efficient First Cause. We find, in fact, in the things which come within the range of our senses, an order of efficient causes. Now amongst them there is no one, nor could there be, which is to itself its own efficient cause, for in that case it must have pre-existed, which is absurd. As, therefore, it is here impossible to mount to the infinite, because subsidiary causes only act by virtue of the first, it is necessary to admit an Efficient First Cause, which by common consent is called God.

III. Besides, amongst beings there are some more or less good, and this diversity can only ensue in proportion as they approach more or less to the Supreme Good, or Supreme Truth, or the Absolute Being. It is necessary, then, that there should be a Being supremely good, true, and great, and Him also we call God.

IV. In addition, we observe that even beings deprived of knowledge advance towards a certain end. For they always, or at least most ordinarily, advance in the same manner, by suitable means, and arrive at their end. Manifestly, therefore, this cannot be by hazard, but by an intelligent provision which directs them, and this Intelligence we call God.

V. And, also, there is no natural propensity which can be deprived of its object—a fact perceivable to anyone who studies nature animate or inanimate. Now all men have a natural propensity to believe that there exists a Being

who rules the universe, and whom they call God. The proof of the fact is that no one has ever yet succeeded in firmly establishing the conviction that there is *no God*. No nation, however barbarous, has yet appeared who has not recognised the existence of a God. In all times and places humanity has preserved that belief, and what is in all times and places the universal belief, is the result of a natural and therefore infallible propensity.

Besides, is it not from the unreflecting movements of the soul that nature draws her propensities? Well, then, the proof that the consciousness of a God is natural, is that in perils and misfortunes, when all human succour fails us, we instinctively turn to the heavens, *as the effect turns toward its cause.* The belief in a First Principle of things, in a Sovereign Moderator of the world, is natural to us. There is then a God.

CHAPTER VII.

GOD IS NEITHER A BODY, NOR FORM OF BODY, NOR ANYTHING COMPOSITE.

THAT God is neither a body, nor the form of a body, nor anything composite, but that He is an independent existence, is what no philosopher doubts. For every body, the philosophers prove imparts no more motion than what it receives. If then God were a body He could not be the first unmoved power Nor would He be the most noble of beings, for it is evident that what is spirit is more noble than what is body.

God is not the form of body, for that which has its being by itself is more noble than that which has it by another. Now every form of body exists in another being as in a subject which bears it; therefore God the most noble Being, that is the first cause of being, cannot be the form of body.

Besides the form of a body is not itself that entirety composed of the substance and the form; it is only the principle of it. The whole is that which is neither the form alone, nor the matter alone, but something more perfect than matter and form taken separately, the whole being more perfect than the part. If then God were a corporeal form, He could not be the most perfect being—there would be something more perfect than He.

And again, that which enters into the composition of a whole is neither the first agent, nor an agent by itself. In fact it is not the hand which acts, but the man by means of the hand. If then God were a form of body He would not be First Agent, and by Himself consequently He would not be the First Cause. Now, though God enters as part in the composition of every whole, He is not therefore a composite, but an independent existence. In God, in fine, there is no distinction between the being and the form, otherwise God would be a Being by participation, and not by essence; and then there would be a Being anterior to Him, every entity by participation being dependent upon that which exists by essence. God then being the first entity upon whom all depends, all that is in Him is there as essence, that is, is not distinct from His essence. It follows, therefore, that God is an independent Being. In the same way every composite, being posterior to that which composes it, and in dependence upon it, and having necessarily a cause (since all things specifically diverse only form a whole by one cause), it would follow that God would be neither the First being, nor the First Efficient Cause, which has been already shown to be absurd.

CHAPTER VIII.

THAT GOD IS SOVEREIGNLY PERFECT AND GOOD, INFINITELY POWERFUL, OMNIPRESENT, IMMUTABLE, AND ETERNAL.

IF then we confess as a fact that God is necessarily an independent Being, we must also, compelled to it as we are by the most powerful reasons, confess that He is a perfect Being—sovereignly good, infinitely powerful, omnipresent, immutable, eternal. The evidence forces us to acknowledge that if God be an independent Being He is a perfect Being, and sovereignly good. For a being existing by itself contains every perfection of being, as that which is heat in itself essentially contains every perfection of heat. God therefore existing independently, and by Himself, cannot want any perfection of Being. Now all perfections relate to that of being because a thing is perfect only by the being which it contains. Hence it results that all goodness and perfection are in God.

It follows, therefore, that God is infinite in being and in power. In fact the infinite is that which has no bounds. Now every form considered in itself suits many objects, and under this relation is infinite; considered on the contrary as being united to matter it determines itself, and under this relation is finite. But God, who exists independently, who subsists by Himself without the need of

matter could not be finite. He is then sovereignly formal and infinite.

Now that which is sovereignly formal is Being itself. And as that which is the active principle of a thing is only so by the quality of actual being and perfect being (for that which is passive is so by defect and imperfection), God having an independent existence, a perfect Being must possess the active principle and infinite power.

Nothing in Him is passive, everything active.

From this principle it follows further that God is entirely indivisible. Every active cause is conjoined to the object on which it acts, for it is necessary that the motor and the being which is moved should be united. God then being the first universal cause of all existence a necessary entity, every thing which is, proceeds from Him, as the effect proceeds from the cause, just as combustion proceeds from fire.

Now God being the universal cause, not only potentially but actually, is omnipresent not only from the first moment of creation but in the whole course of the duration of created being. And as the Being who is the form of that which exists, He is also its most intimate reality.

He is immutable and eternal, for an independent existence cannot be subject to any change. That which changes is potential, all movement being the transition of potentiality into actuality, as the philosophers have proved.*

He is then eternal, or He would not be immutable, and

* Aristotle in his "Physics and Metaphysics" builds up his theory of creation upon this principle of elevation of matter from potential to actual being.

there would be in Him a passive force, so that He would be no longer an independent existence.

Besides, if God be not eternal He would have a commencement, or an end, or at once a commencement and an end. Now if He had a beginning, far from *being* God he would *have come* from God, and be no independent existence. If He had an end He would be mortal, and would be capable of being annihilated; He would not have infinite power, but a power would dominate over Him greater than His own, and capable of destroying Him.

CHAPTER IX.

THAT GOD IS ONE.

IT is certain, according to the same principles, that God is one. That which is singularly itself is not communicable. Now God is supremely Himself; He is His own nature, an independent existence: therefore He is by nature what He is—that is to say, by His own nature—God. His nature then is incommunicable; there cannot be many Gods.

Besides, God contains, as we have shown, all perfection. If there had been many Gods they would have been different, and the perfection of one would make the imperfection of the other; the rivalry and dissension of all the Gods. Complete absolute perfection is attributable to one only. There cannot then be many Gods.

All the beings we see are well ordered—the one to the other, and lend each other a mutual succour. Now, things being distinct amongst them, how could they have been able to form themselves into a harmonious whole, if they had not been co-ordained by a unique principle? (for one sole disposer is preferable to many). There is then a first and unique principle of universal order, and that principle is God.

The proof of this is latent in nature itself. For example,

the bees by an admirable government are ruled by one of their number alone. Amongst men, art imitating nature, government always resumes itself into the action of one individual; and no government can last if it do not so resume itself in one form or another into the supreme arbitration of one sole power. There can be then only one God.

CHAPTER X.

THAT GOD IS SUPREMELY INTELLIGENT—THAT HE HAS A PERFECT KNOWLEDGE OF ALL THINGS—THAT HE DOES NOT ACT FROM NECESSITY BUT FROM FREE WILL.

AFTER what we have said, it is manifest that God is supremely intelligent—that He has a perfect knowledge of things—that He does not act from necessity but by intelligence and will. In nature itself do we not see that intelligent beings have greater compass than non-intelligent beings? In fact, non-intelligent beings have nothing but their forms, but intelligent beings are adapted to investing their form in strange matter; for the image of a known object is in the subject who knows. That which is material thus limiting the form, the immateriality of a being proves its intelligence. For the same reason intelligence is by virtue of immateriality. Whence plants from their materiality know nothing, whilst the intellect knows because it perceives immaterial phenomena, and for a more powerful reason the spirit knows because it can extend itself still more into the realm of matter. God then being in the highest degree of immateriality is also at the highest degree of knowledge, and we must confess that He only knows all things perfectly.

But since God is a supremely simple and independent Being, we cannot say of Him that He knows by receiving into Himself the image of external objects like our senses and intelligence.* He is to Himself His own intelligence and wisdom, and all that He knows He knows by Himself, and not by the idea. Now if knowledge be in the proportion of immateriality, God is at the highest degree of knowledge, because He is at the highest degree of immateriality. It follows then that He knows Himself perfectly—that He has a complete comprehension of His power—still further, that He is Himself knowledge and wisdom.

And because knowing the virtue of a certain person is to know all the objects to which that virtue extends, so God, whose virtue extends over all things, knows all things by knowing Himself. He sees in Himself all that is not Himself; He sees in His own essence the type, the exemplar of all, for all nature participates in the perfection of God, and exists only as an effect of that participation.† God then, who knows Himself perfectly, knows all the forms under which beings can participate in His perfection; and thus He knows all the modes of being now in existence, or possible to be created.

What folly then to maintain, as some of the philosophers did, that God well knows superior things, but only knows inferior things in general, and confusedly. This is the height of ridicule, because we must then say that man

* Aristot. "De Anima," III., cap. 3.

† This is Plato's theory of creation, worked out in the Timæus, as distinct from that of Aristotle.

knows that of which God is ignorant. Man knows distinctly and singularly inferior things. How then can we dare to say that God only knows them generally and confusedly?

Do we not see in nature that the more virtue a being has the greater is its capacity and penetration? Therefore the Divine Intelligence, which is supremely perfect, must penetrate all things even to their lowest depth.

This is why we say that God acts freely, and not from necessity. Every intelligence and every natural force acts towards an end; but, natural force being blind, knows neither the means nor the end; it is therefore the intelligence which must reveal them to it. Therefore the principle of intelligent and voluntary action precedes the principle of necessary action. Now nothing precedes God, for He is the first agent, and consequently acts from intelligence and free will.

Besides, every necessary agent unless opposed always acts in the same manner, because it acts according to what it is. If then God acted by nature or by necessity, as He contains all perfection of being, He would produce something indeterminate infinite in being, which is repugnant.

And, once more, effects precede their causes according to the mode by which they pre-exist in them, for every agent produces its like. Now God is all intelligent, and consequently the effects which He produces pre-exist in Him according to the intelligence, and proceed from Him by intelligence—that is to say, proceed from intelligence determined by will.

CHAPTER XI.

THAT GOD EXTENDS HIS PROVIDENCE OVER ALL THINGS.

AFTER all we have said, who can doubt that God extends His Providence not only over the entire realm of nature, but over every being, even the smallest.

Providence, in fact, is that Reason which co-ordains things to their end. Now, God being the First Cause, has a greater influence upon the effect produced than the second cause. Consequently, as God acts in all things by intelligence and will, and not by necessity of nature; as He is the Sovereign Wisdom to which belongs the well ordering and disposing of all beings, it is evident that God does nothing that is not well ordained.

God has, therefore, in Himself that supreme wisdom which co-ordains things to their end; there is then in God a universal providence.

From observing the admirable order which reigns in nature, the philosophers have well comprehended that it would be senseless to deny a Divine providence.

Nevertheless, the moral order, in which an apparent confusion prevails, has offered them more than one difficulty. However, a serious and just reflection suffices to the comprehension of the fact that man, being the chief end of creation, it would be foolish to say that God would occupy

Himself less with him than with nature itself. The more noble and great a thing is the more it participates in that order which forms the perfection of the whole.

If, then, even natural things in their operations fall under the providential law which rules them, how much more reason is there for such a law over man and his acts.

Besides, the closer the connection between a thing and its end, the closer is its connection with the law which co-ordains it to that end. Now, men and their operations are co-ordained by God in a closer manner than the operations of the other beings of nature; therefore, the providential law affects man and his works in a much closer manner than it does other orders of nature.

Further, the government of providence proceeds from that love which God bears, as First Cause, towards the things He has created, and which are dependent upon Him.

Consequently, He governs with so much more vigilant providence as His love is greater. Now, He loves man more than all the rest of creation, as is proved by the blessings He has conferred upon him; consequently, His providence broods over him with the greater attention.

In the same manner as effects lead us to the knowledge of their causes, and God being the First Cause of all, the second causes coming from the first, we can judge of the love which He bears towards man, his creature, by the love which causes in general have for their effects, for they lead them to their ends by their whole energy and by the most

convenient means. God, therefore, extends His Providence over all humanity and human affairs.

Besides, how could God not provide for all human affairs —He who acts in everything from intelligence and will? Would it be from inability? But He is infinitely powerful. Would it be from ignorance? But He knows everything. Would it be from indifference? But He is supremely good; and He who is good will not despise His work: a good cause never despises His effects. How can one call that government good which occupies itself with inferior matters to the neglect of what is more excellent?

God, the most excellent cause, supremely surpasses all things in goodness. Even amongst men, are not those the better who occupy themselves most assiduously in the interests of humanity? How then can God neglect them?

CHAPTER XII.

CONCERNING THE END TO WHICH DIVINE PROVIDENCE CONDUCTS MAN.

AS it belongs to Providence to direct everything to its end by convenient means, and as all things have not the same end, it is necessary that it should employ different means to cause each being to attain to its proper end. Beings deprived of reason, God conducts to their end by a natural inclination, which proceeds in such manner that they are rather moved than self-moving.

But man, who has free will, participates, to a certain degree, in the action of Divine providence, and therefore is conducted towards his end by God in such a way as that he, co-operating with God, conducts himself, directing his actions towards that desirable goal which has been marked out for him.

It belongs then to man to ascertain with care what is this latter end to which Divine providence has destined his reasonable soul; to discover the most suitable means by which he may in the surest manner, according to the disposition of God, arrive at that end, and to order himself and everything concerning him with a view to that end.

This is the reason why the philosophers have been com-

pelled to search out this final end. And as nature proceeds gradually from less perfect to more perfect, they have successively advanced in the discovery of the truth. The most ancient of them have spoken very imperfectly upon this subject; those who followed, adding their light to that of their predecessors, have more closely approached the truth; and thus it is that the most excellent philosophers have established upon solid reasons that the end of human life is the contemplation of Divine things.* This, indeed, is the only and proper occupation of man; it is the only one which is ordained to his proper end, which should be desired for itself, and which, without confounding, unites God to man. Man is more apt to engage by himself in this duty because he has less means of seeking in it the aid of external things.

To this end, also, everything which has man for its object tends. In fact, in order that this contemplation may be perfect, the health of the body is necessary, towards which the entire economy of human life is directed: here should also be peace, and that calm in the passions which we obtain by prudence and other moral virtues; there should be exterior security, which is procured by the laws of the civil order. Thus, then, according to these philosophers, everything in nature and society has for its end this Divine contemplation.

This being so, let us confess that the Divine providence has conducted man by the exercise of moral virtues in order

* See Plato I. Alcibiades, in which he says we should behold ourselves always in the Deity—the light alone capable of giving us a knowledge of the truth.

that by these virtues, arriving at the contemplation of the Supreme Being, he might be perfect and happy.

But as God conducts all beings by their proper laws, and as the interior law of man is His free will, God conducts him only by liberty; and, if man will not oppose his liberty to the action of God, he will most certainly arrive at the consummation of life by the most suitable means.

CHAPTER XIII.

THAT THE END OF MAN IS NOT THE PRESENT LIFE.

DOUBTLESS, it will appear difficult to every attentive mind to believe that man can in this life attain to such beatitude. In fact, that which renders us perfectly happy is not a feeble and obscure contemplation of God, but a contemplation full and luminous to the extent of our capacity, for this contemplation of God is our final end. Now, this contemplation demands the supreme effort of human thought. It is but little we can do here below, for the soul acquires knowledge on earth only by sensible phenomena and through the medium of corporeal organs; and a great number of men are so obtuse, organised in so unfavourable a manner, that they can scarcely comprehend the most simple truths. Others are distracted by domestic cares, by the necessities of life, from this study of truth, which demands the entire man. Divine contemplation requires a perfect nature, a life exempt from external occupations, so that there are very few men who can find here that repose so necessary to attain to their end.

Besides, should we find a few capable of doing so, what studies would not be necessary to them to arrive at such a pure contemplation?

Only knowing things spiritual by things sensible, we must acquire a considerable amount of preliminary knowledge. For this reason, and as a last resource, the philosophers recommended and taught metaphysics, which has God for its object and all that concerns Him; and they did so principally for this reason, that the study of that science requires purity of heart, and an entire repose of the passions. In fine, it is only by this calm of the passions and the quietude of the senses, that the soul can become prudent by care and time, and few there are who arrive at such perfection. This, the reason why many departing from this life quite young, and others never applying themselves to the exercise of virtue and the contemplation of God, it is true to say, that scarcely any one man attains to happiness below.

A more thorough examination of this truth will convince us that there are very few who arrive at the knowledge and contemplation of Divine things. Man, from the weakness of his mind, is deceived in a thousand ways, even in the order of nature. Often it is the senses, the sources of our knowledge, which lead us into error. Often it is the imagination, which induces clouds over the intelligence, so that it appears difficult to many to believe that there are spiritual substances. At other times it is the judgment which is false and deceives us. We often take as a demonstration what is only probability, and, after all, perhaps an empty sophism.

Certainly, the different opinions of the best minds on a multitude of questions fully attest this fact. In their turn, also, the passions of the soul, vicious habits, the various

natural propensities of man, alienate him from his object, and how much more from knowledge of Divine things?

Consequently, there are few men who can become happy. But is not this a contradiction? For happiness is the final end of man, and, therefore, proper to all. If, then, there is no other happiness here than this, infants, young people, nearly the whole human race, will never attain to it.

Let us pursue still more attentively the study of this capital point, and we shall see that the true happiness of man cannot be on this earth. For supreme happiness does not admit of an admixture of pains and troubles. Happiness, being by itself the sufficient good, once we possess it there is nothing else to be desired. But in this life who can be so satisfied as to desire nothing, to be exempt from all misfortune, and sheltered from all trouble? Alas! human nature is, on the contrary, subjected to a thousand reverses and losses of all kinds. How often does a single misfortune utterly destroy an apparent felicity? Recall to your mind the history of Priam, and consult the lessons of your own experience.

But, if one could attain to such a beatitude, would all men then have real happiness? No; for happiness being the final aim of man it involves perfect repose of heart. Now, all men desire to know; and this desire, inspired by nature, will slumber only when they shall reach the termination of full and entire knowledge.

What an infinity of things are there, even in nature, that we desire to know, of which the human intellect can never gain a complete knowledge! This is attested by that multi-

tude of sages and philosophers, who, from the origin of the world, have attempted to penetrate into the mysteries of nature; and if they have learned some things they are still ignorant of a greater number. They all agree that the greatest amount of knowledge we possess is surpassed by our ignorance. They say they do not yet know the ultimate difference of things, and to define them they are obliged to name their accidents. If, then, our intelligence is obscure when the question is about natural things, how can it elevate itself to the contemplation of supernatural things? What is permitted us by God to know here, is narrow and uncertain. Our desire finds no repose in such feeble light. What do I say? the more the light increases so much more increases the desire: it is the law of all natural movement to become more violent as it approaches its end. Thus, the heart is borne towards God so much the more swiftly as we advance in knowledge of the perfect being. We shall then never repose, since here we can never attain to supreme contemplation. "Our eye," says the philosopher, "is as little open to the luminous revelations of nature as that of the owl to the brilliancy of the sun."

After all, he who would attain to that degree of knowledge, to that high contemplation of God, and who, after long and numerous labours, should find the repose of his soul, could he be called happy? No, for he would soon have to die. All men have naturally a desire for that which endures for ever. They will immortalise themselves by their race and their works. Now as to the wise man, if there be no other

life, could he help being sorry at death? No, for he must hate that which is an evil, and what greater evil is there than the privation of that incomparable and blessed life which he has so ardently desired, the consoling thought of which is the sole occupation of the sage? But the wisest man cannot escape the thought of death, for he has reason, and is not, like animals, devoid of foresight; consequently, it is impossible to call him happy who, after having pursued happiness with all his strength, foresees its irreparable loss without knowing the hour or the circumstances of that loss. Let us conclude, then, that without the belief in a future life there is nothing more wretched and sad than man. What! shall all other beings attain to their end, and man, arrested by a thousand obstacles, in spite of his cares, his efforts, never arrive at it?—or, after having obtained the prize of his exertions, his time, his watching, shall he lose it without remedy? Down with a doctrine which assigns such a fate to the noblest creation of God!

CHAPTER XIV.

THAT THE HUMAN SOUL IS IMMORTAL.

WHAT we have just said compels us to confess the existence of another life, and the immortality of the soul. In fact, Providence conducts everything to its end. Now, the end of man not being on earth, it is necessary to admit another life, where we shall find the happiness He has provided.

Another reason of this truth is, that the proper work of man—that is, comprehension, extending from things material to things immaterial and universal—proves that there is in him an incorruptible, immaterial principle. Upon this point there have been many opinions, but, certainly, short of admitting that this incorruptible principle is the soul, and that the soul is the form of man,* we cannot escape a crowd of errors which ensue.†

In fact, that which signifies man is reason and intelligence. If, then, the spiritual substance be not the form of

* Aristot. "De Anima," lib. II. cap. I. sec. 6.

† Thales thought the soul was fire; the Pythagoreans, a number, and an emanation from the central fire; Heraclitus, that its excellence was its freedom from aqueous particles; Leucippus, a mass of round atoms; Democritus, globular atoms of fire; Empedocles, thought it a union of the four elements; and Critias placed its seat in the blood. See the Introduction to Aristotle's "De Anima," where all the previous opinions are enumerated and refuted.

man, why is it that he is distinguished by intelligence and wisdom? for every being is distinguished by its form. It is necessary, then, to give to man another form from which he derives his existence. Now, if this new form given to man be not intelligence and reason, will he differ from animals?

Besides, the operations of the animating principle have the same relation with the soul which exists between secondary acts and the first act. Now, the first act precedes the second, just, as for example, to know a thing precedes the act of considering it. Every being who accomplishes deeds, manifests a living principle, and, at the same time, and by those deeds, proves that he has a soul, which is, as regards his actions, as the first act to the second; for the soul is the principle of life and its operations. But man has an operation peculiar to him, and which elevates him, by its excellence, above all the lower animals. This peculiar operation of man is to comprehend and reason. Then we must establish some principle of this operation, which must be the form of the man, and which must stand in relation to his intelligence and reason as the the first act to the second.

Besides, every being which moves itself is compounded of a mover and a subject put in motion. Now man moves himself like other animals. The prime mover in man, then, being intelligence and will, it is necessary to admit that man is composed of a spiritual substance, which is his form, and a body, which is his matter.*

* Savonarola uses the word form in the same sense as Aristotle, whose theory of creation was the elevation of abstract matter (ὑλη) into form (εἶδος), mediated by

In the same way, if the spiritual substance which we call soul be not the form of the body, we do not know how an infant can be called a man, since an infant does not yet accomplish intellectual operations. We do not see how we can say that a man comprehends, unless he is composed of a soul and body; for actions belong to personality, To comprehend, therefore, and to reason, would not be operations peculiar to man, but to another intelligence having a distinct existence from him, or, at least, to say with Plato, that is not, in fact, composed of a soul and body, but is only a soul joined to a body, as a motor to the object put in motion—a theory which is false, as can be proved by the errors arising out of it. First, man would not be endowed with sensibility—even after the separation of the soul from the body, the body and its parts would be of the same species as before; for the motor, in separating itself from what it moves, does not change its species. Further, the body of the man would not then live through the intelligent soul, and man would not be generated by the union of an intelligent soul with a body; for the object moved is engendered by the action of the mover. Whence then would be the generation of man if the soul is not engendered, and if the body which is engendered be not man? Where is the paternity? Where is the filiation? These absurd consequences, and other similar, must singularly embarrass those who will not admit that the soul is the form of the

four causes—the formal, the material, the efficient, and the final. When Savonarola thus speaks of the form of a man, he means that formative principle which makes of flesh and blood, the matter—a man. This principle he goes on to show is the soul, which is thus the form of the man.

man. Now, since the resolution of objections is knowledge of the truth, and since those who admit the intelligent soul as the form of man resolve all the difficulties which oppose them, it is clear that they are right; for in itself it is not repugnant to reason that the intelligent soul should be the form of the body, and yet in its highest capacity should be separate from the body, that is, from bodily organs. For the soul being the highest of natural forms, and the most noble of immaterial forms, it is not surprising that it should be, to a certain degree, supreme—on the one side united, and on the other separated. This is what has been called by many the knot of the world, the tie which in nature binds things superior to things inferior.

That being so, let us conclude that the soul is immortal and incorruptible; for every spiritual substance is incorruptible. In fact, all perfection must be in proportion to its principle. Now the principle of the perfection of man is something incorruptible and universal; for the perfection of man is to comprehend. As, then, the faculty of comprehension is the property of the universal and incorruptible, let us conclude that the intelligent soul is incorruptible.

Besides, the perfection of the soul consists in a certain separation from the body. The more it rises to the immaterial and incorruptible, the more it perfects itself. Now it would be absurd to pretend that by elevating itself it corrupted itself. Can a thing, in fact, corrupt itself by perfecting itself, or tend at one time to perfection and corruption?

It is vain to say that the perfection of the soul consists in

being separated from the body in the relation of action, but that under the relation of being, it on the contrary corrupts itself in separating from it; for operation denotes substance, and being acts according to what it is, and the operation which is proper to it descends from the nature which belongs to it.

The operation of a being cannot then perfect itself independently of its substance. If the operation of man, as man, draws its perfection from its separation from the body, it follows that spiritual substance cannot corrupt itself by separating itself from the body.

Such is the innate conviction of all men: they universally admit the immortality of the soul. No one can deny this without deceiving himself, and everyone makes it an object of ceaseless investigation. All are naturally inclined towards it, and all desire the most complete instruction concerning it. The greatest philosophers have discoursed upon this subject; the poets have treated it in their verses; wise men and the vulgar have written about it. Unless, therefore, God and nature act in vain, this desire, this inclination, these pre-occupations, are they not proofs of the truth? The soul, then, is immortal. The desire of happiness, and the fear out of which that desire arises, are given to us by God to lead us to immortality—the term of our happiness. Therefore, as those who deny that the soul is the form of the man involve themselves into the most inextricable difficulties, so those who deny that it is immortal cannot resolve the objections they create. Besides, as we have said, it is difficult, or, rather,

impossible, if the soul be not immortal to comprehend how man is an animal—reasonable, endowed with free will, and subject to troubles; what is his end, how he can be an object of the cares of Providence, and many other things, to mention which would be useless.

What remains now to be said is above human reason; and this is why we have terminated our first book, and compel ourselves to collect all our powers to treat with more sublimity the verities of the faith; for where reason terminates there faith begins. In establishing faith we put the immortality of the soul still further beyond doubt.

BOOK II.

PREAMBLE.

AFTER having treated in the preceding book as much as necessary to our object, upon the truths of the order of nature, we have now to treat of supernatural truths, for the purpose of demonstrating, by reason and faith, the truth of the Christian religion. And because we know present things more easily than future, and that faith in the past is more easily lost than faith in the present, we shall establish, as the base of our reasoning, the daily doings which we see Christians perform in the Church, and which being manifest cannot be doubted by any one. I do not here speak of evil Christians who, in one sense, are not in the Church; I speak of the actions of the good, of those who are Christians not only in name but in deed. Then we shall apply to the actions of Christ Himself, known to all, the truths we have preliminarily established; and the present will serve as a sort of foundation for the past.

Now as the principal effect which He accomplishes is

justice and perfect innocence of life, our Lord having said, "I am come that they might have life," we shall prove first, that the faith of Christ is true, by arguments drawn from the life of Christians. Secondly, we shall treat of the causes of that so excellent life. Thirdly, of the effects. These three questions embrace nearly all that the Church militant accomplishes on earth.

CHAPTER I.

THERE IS A TRUE RELIGION.

ALL that we have said hitherto leads us to this conclusion, that there is a true religion. True religion in fact is the legitimate worship which we render to God as to the Principal and Universal Moderator of all beings. For every effect renders a certain worship to the cause from which it proceeds when turning itself towards it, as if invoking it, it submits itself to its empire and renders itself like to its perfection. But what is this other than a certain tribute of honour to arrive at a higher degree of excellence? God then being the Universal Cause whence the world and every good thing proceed, it is natural that man should turn towards God, invoke Him, submit to His authority, and as far as in him lies become like Him, and be perfected by Him—that is to say, should render Him worship.

Now a natural tendency cannot be altogether vain. It is, therefore, necessary to conclude that there must be amongst men a true religion. Let us add, that man, borne naturally towards honouring God as every effect is borne towards its cause, is not in this feeling of which he is conscious, like to other beings of nature, because he acts from reason and free will, and directs himself. But if he could deceive himself

in such a matter so far as to render it impossible to find the legitimate worship due to God, what would become of providence? It would not occupy itself in that case with what is most important, most necessary—with what conducts a man to his end. But this is impossible to admit, as we have already shown.

The diversity of worship in all times serves to establish the fact that worship is natural to man. That which all men have done everywhere and always, must be in nature. If, then, every worship is vain, what becomes of the power of natural inclination? does it serve to lead man to his end? and still what becomes of providence if it takes a greater care of inanimate beings than of man endowed with reason and intelligence?

Besides, every cause transfuses into its effect as much as possible of its goodness and perfection. It endeavours in every way, according to the capacity of the effect, to draw it to itself and to render it like itself. God, consequently, who is supremely good, who is the universal First Cause, proposes, without doubt, the perfection of man, in favour of whom He has established all the good things of nature. But the perfection of man, consisting in love of God and submission to His authority, it follows that there must be a true religion.

CHAPTER II.

THERE ARE TWO SORTS OF WORSHIP OF GOD.

GOD may be honoured by men in two ways—by the soul and by the body. This is why we must establish the fact that there are two modes of worship, the one interior and the other exterior. The interior worship is that which we render to God by the operation of the spirit and the will. The exterior worship consists of signs of religion given by the body—ceremonies and sacrifices. Now, as matter is perfected by form, it is indubitable that the exterior worship refers to the interior, and is subordinate to it.

The true interior worship is the rectitude and perfection of the life of the interior man, by which God is honoured above all. Every cause, in fact, is honoured by the effect it produces; now there is no effect more noble than man, whose perfection will honour God in the proportion of its greatness, so that this perfection itself being in the proportion of the sanctity of life, it follows that the principal honour rendered to God is the good and perfect life of a man. Consequently, the true integral worship of God consists in the life and acts of the perfect man, and in the offering up to God of that life and its acts.

It is not for himself alone that man renders to God homage and adoration, it is also that he may obtain the goodness and all the blessings that are made for him. Therefore the two modes of worship are a means and a disposition to obtain those blessings, for every agent implies the disposition of its subject. Therefore, as man is evidently better disposed by a holy life than by sacrifices to obtain happiness from God, and all blessings, *it follows that the true worship consists in holiness of life.*

CHAPTER III.

THAT THERE IS NO LIFE SO EXCELLENT AS THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

IT is impossible ever to imagine or to find a more holy and better life than that of the Christian. Let us examine the various forms of life.

Among living beings those who have only a vegetative soul like plants are of the lowest degree.* Animal life has many degrees, one being more perfect than another; the more capable animals are of sensible cognizance, the more perfect is their life. But the intellectual cognizance surpassing that of the senses, men have a more perfect life than animals. Amongst men also there are different degrees of life, for we prefer those who take reason for their guide to those who only follow sense, because by doing the latter and following desire a man becomes so much the more like the brute, whereas he becomes the more like a man when he opposes himself to the concupiscent appetite. For the life of man being above that of beasts, without doubt,

* Aristotle in the "De Anima," I. cap. 1, defines the soul of the plant to be simply nutritive, that of animals nutritive and sensitive, that of man nutritive, sensitive, and cognitive. The plant is nourished, but neither feels nor thinks; the animal is nourished and feels, but does not think; man unites these two characteristics, but is elevated above nature by the possession of a thinking soul.

amongst men those are best and most perfect who conduct themselves according to the laws of reason, and their excellence varies again according to the degree of their wisdom. The perfection of the soul depending upon the knowledge and love of spiritual things, above all things, of God, the soul will be perfect in proportion as it elevates itself to a higher degree in knowledge of spiritual and divine things. Now the Christian life has for its end to tend towards God at the exclusion of the whole spiritual or corporeal creature, to transfuse itself, so to speak, in Him, and to become with Him one and the same spirit. This is the final end and principle of man. There is no life, then, more perfect than that of the Christian.

And besides, the rectitude of the life of man—as man—is estimated according to the degree of reason, which is the rule of it. The life of a man will be worthy in proportion to its conformation to right reason. This is why true Christians, who do nothing contrary to the rules of the wisest reason, lead a more excellent life than other men.

And, further, the rectitude of life has for its end to conduct men to the contemplation of Divine perfection, and to lead them to that sublime end, which demands a great purity of spirit: a Being subject to passions is not apt for the exercise of contemplation. Therefore, we shall find no other kind of life which renders a man more pure and more free than the Christian life—which surpasses all others in excellence and dignity.

CHAPTER IV.

THERE IS NO END MORE EXCELLENT THAN THAT WHICH THE CHRISTIAN LIFE ASSIGNS.

BUT in order to demonstrate more clearly that there is no better life than this of the Christian, we shall prove that the two things requisite for an excellent life, namely, the perfect end and the perfect means, belong to the Christian life. Let us commence by what concerns the end; we shall then speak of the means, and we shall prove that they are admirably proportioned to the end towards which they tend.

There are two kinds of ends—the one called *finis cujus*, which is the thing itself towards which one tends, and the other called *finis quo*, which is the enjoyment of the thing desired.

Now God—the greatest Being, the most perfect—is the end towards which the Christian life tends, and in which it reposes in a complete happiness. All the acts of a Christian life tend to that. Could there be a more excellent end? Faith proposes to itself as an end the vision of God and the enjoyment of God, not in His creation, but in Himself, in His proper essence. Can we conceive of a more perfect act. Man united to God by the intuitive vision, and the

full and entire joy is consummated in perfection. There is nothing more sublime than that end, for there is nothing more sublime than God.

Now it is not less evident, from the most solid reasons, that the happiness of man consists in the clear vision of God. In fact, we have proved that here man cannot be happy. However, as the contemplation of truth is the condition of his happiness, it is therefore necessary that this contemplation must take place, follow on, in another life. But how in the other life can this contemplation be anything else than the clear vision of God? If it were otherwise, would the desire of man be appeased? Man would then know perfectly or imperfectly the effects of material and immaterial substances. In the same manner he would not know God but imperfectly, and then as that which is imperfect tends to become perfect, the soul, hungry after knowledge, would have no repose. This is proved by the incessant labour with which any one pursues a truth which he would make clear.

In the first case, knowing perfectly the effects, he would wish to know also the cause, for men naturally desire to know. But to know is to know the cause.* What nature demands is invincible, and every movement being more violent towards the end than at the beginning, man

* Aristotle says that to know a thing, τo ὁτι, as a mere existence, is a lower kind of knowledge than to know it, τo δι' ὁτι—the cause of its being. "Therefore," he adds, "we think that those who know first principles are more to be estimated than the hand-workers, because they know the causes of created things; but the hand-workers do things like inanimate beings, just as *fire burns*. Inanimate beings perform their acts from a certain nature, and the hand-workers through habit, so that those who know first principles are not wiser as regards the practical, but from their knowledge of causes."—See "Metaphysics, Lib. I., cap. 1."

will be more eager to know the cause when he knows better the effects. How then will the desire of our hearts be gratifie dif we have not a clear view of God? Nothing finite can fill the capacity of our soul—our spirit always goes beyond the finite. Conceive of a finite line or a finite number—it is always possible to add mentally to that line and number. In that is the reason of the mathematical infinity in lines or numbers. Now every substance, with the exception of that of God being finite, our intelligence cannot be satisfied as long as it has not attained to God himself, who is an independent and infinite existence. Reason does not allow of the application of any other end to man than that which faith teaches, namely the clear view of the Divine essence, and it is more apparent than daylight that God is the final end and supreme rest of the soul. For every natural movement tends towards a final end, in which it reposes when it arrives there. As then, besides God, no other being can satisfy the desire of the human heart; we justly say that we shall only enjoy perfect repose when we arrive at our end and see God face to face.*

Then we shall have nothing more to desire, for there is nothing above God. The desire of beings inferior to Him will not torment us, for there is no proportion between the finite and the infinite, and we cannot find in the effect a perfection which cannot be more perfectly found in the first cause. Besides, our intelligence, perfected by the supreme

* See a beautiful tractate upon this subject in Bonaventura, opp. vol. iv., called "Itinerarium mentis in Deum." The Germans, who overlook nothing, have a translation of it, edited by Luttenback, "Weg des Geistes zu Gott," 1836.

intelligible, can easily comprehend other intelligibles, towards which it tends naturally; for although the sensible corrupts the sense, yet the supreme intelligible perfects the intelligence.

Therefore God, who is infinite and above all substance, cannot be perceived in the clear vision of His being by the force of human intelligence. A new disposition is necessary to arrive at that view which the theologians call the light of glory, which God gives by infusion to every purified soul, to make it capable of the intuitive vision; for God always gives the means to arrive at the end, and that is why by His own strength He elevates man, who could not attain to it by his own force, to his Divine Being.

In fact, the natural light of the intelligence not being proportioned to the intuitive vision of God, cannot attain to it by itself. The help necessary is the light of glory; then how true and how reasonable is our faith in its teachings on the end of life, how it resolves all the difficulties which embarrassed the philosophers who wished to contradict it.

Let us conclude, consequently, that it is impossible to imagine or to find, either as term or as tendency, a more noble end for man than this which is preached by the Christian religion and pursued by Christians.

CHAPTER V.

THERE IS NO MEANS MORE CONVENIENT THAN CHRISTIANITY TO LEAD TO BLESSEDNESS.

IT will be equally easy to us to prove there is no better method more adapted to conduct man to the end which we have established, than that which forms the faith of Christianity. For, in the first place, it is not doubtful that some measure is necessary to conduct man to blessedness, God and nature not acting by chance, for everything which did not arrive at an end would be created by chance. In vain would a being have the power of motion, if it had not the members capable of receiving the impulsion of that interior force. Therefore men, having by nature a desire of happiness, will be uselessly consumed by this desire, if they are not provided with means necessary to its realisation. There must, then, be some means by which man can attain to the vision of God. This means, the Christians call purity of heart and Divine grace, which being supernaturally infused, perfects souls in every kind of virtue.

No one will contest that purity of heart is a means of arriving at the contemplation of the first truth, for the means and the end should be proportionate. Knowledge of God exacts a great application of the mind, God being the

supreme intelligible, and the purest being, the most elevated above all sensible beings. To arrive at the contemplation of God, then, there is a necessity for an extreme purity of soul, a complete distraction from sensible things and external embarrassments; for what is pure is so only by virtue of being detached from an inferior nature. This is why our intelligence, being distinct from every corporeal organ, and our soul being a rational substance, the more completely it separates itself from corporeal things, and attaches itself to spiritual, the more pure it becomes.

Now all that the philosophers have taught about purity of heart, virtues, and good manners, the Christian religion not only teaches and prescribes, but, in addition, it gives us the most perfect principles for living holily, and maintaining our heart in perfect purity. Natural morality, in fact, cannot be a sufficient means to conduct man to his end. Everything which surpasses the natural limits of a being can come to that being only by a gift exterior and superior to it, just as water does not rise above its level but by certain hydraulic means. This is the reason why everyone endowed with intelligence only comprehends according to the grade of his intelligence, and therefore as the force of a created mind is not able to arrive at the intuitive vision of God, there is a necessity to that force for Divine assistance, which will operate in it a sufficient purity. The purity of life, taught by philosophers, is insufficient to lead man to the Divine blessedness. Christians, then, are right in establishing that the grace of God, as well as natural virtues, is necessary to us, for they know that God has not made us defectively by this

necessity, but that He will give us all that is indispensable to arrive at our goal, and the end to which all our desires tend. We have no intention to dwell longer here upon this point; the limits of our work do not permit it, and besides we have already spoken in detail upon the subject in our book "On the Simplicity of the Christian Life," in which we have shown the life of the Christian does not result from natural love, nor imagination, nor reason alone, nor from the influence of the stars, nor from a spiritual creation, but from the grace of God; that is to say, a supernatural gift accorded by infusion. Let anyone, then, who desires to know more, read this book we have cited, and he will understand that the Christian life is the most perfect means to conduct man to his end, whence it follows that the Christian life is in every way the best and most perfect.

CHAPTER VI.

RELIGION CONDUCTS MEN TO BLESSEDNESS.

IF, then, as we have proved, there must be amongst men a true religion, which consists in rectitude of life, we are compelled to admit that the Christian religion, which in this point is above all others, is that true religion, and renders to God a perfect exterior and interior worship.

The exterior worship of the Christian religion produces, or rather signifies, the interior worship. Now, if the interior worship in Christianity be true, manifestly the exterior worship, which is its expression, produces or signifies the truth. The exterior worship is, then, legitimate and true, only by the necessary correspondence which it has with the interior worship.

The honour we render to God, as much by reason of the excellence of His supreme being as by reason of the happiness we demand of Him, constitutes in Christianity the true worship of God, and promises to Christians the realisation of that blessedness which they expect and to which they hope to attain. Therefore, whoever lives in a Christian manner, and perseveres to the end, may fearlessly promise himself this blessedness. Besides, the Divine providence, which conducts everything to its end by proper means, has removed all cause of doubt that Christians may attain to this blessed-

ness, since there is no other means so perfectly in relation to this blessedness as the Christian life.

Further, if God be just, to doubt which is impious, Christians who observe the commandments of God cannot perish. God, the universal cause of everything, whose action leads everything to its end, will give that blessedness to some men, or will give it to none. Now, it would be absurd to say He will give it to none; in that case, why was man created? If, on the contrary, he gives it to some, the Christians, who as we have seen are the most perfect, will have a part in that recompense. If Christians, who by their piety, their religion, are the most perfect men of all others, be disinherited from the blessedness to which they aspire, no one else need pretend to it. By the religion they profess, Christians are more in the way of arriving to that goal, whence it issues that the Christian religion is preferable to all others. If, then, Christians in such a religion be frustrated in their hopes, the blessedness itself could have no existence, but must be regarded as a fable and a falsehood; for in nature every agent, if it meet no obstacle, gives form to the matter upon which it acts, when that matter is conveniently disposed. Now the end and ultimate orm of the perfect life is blessedness, to which no life is better ordered than that of the Christian.

If, then, this blessedness be not accorded to the Christian life, which is so well adapted to such an end, there can be no blessedness for man, for, as we have proved, it is impossible to conceive for man any other blessedness than what we have established. Consequently, human life would

have no final end. Now the end being the rule of everything which is in relation to it, it would follow that man must be delivered up to disorder and uncertainty—must be the most wretched of all beings, subjected to the caprices of chance, and deprived of all providential aid.

But it would be absurd to maintain such conclusions, for the Christian life (and that is what we had to prove) tends most certainly by true religion towards blessedness.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CHRISTIAN FAITH IS TRUE, BECAUSE IT IS THE CAUSE OF A PERFECT LIFE.

AFTER having demonstrated the truth of the Christian religion, by the excellence of the life Christians lead, we approach the causes of that life, to draw from them a new proof.

Now, the first cause of this life is faith in Jesus Christ crucified, formed by charity; that is to say, acting by love according to the word of Scripture, "the justification of God is by faith in Jesus Christ to all those who believe on Him, and without faith it is impossible to please God."

We call a formed faith that by which, in loving Jesus Christ above all things, we believe that He is true God and true man; that He is the Son of God, a sole God with the Father and Holy Ghost, and personally distinct from these two persons. Faith in Christ, joined to love, is, then, the cause of that Christian life of which we speak. This is proved by the experience of every day, and can be denied by no one. In fact, a Christian advances in virtue in proportion as he progresses in faith, and he recoils from the way of virtue in proportion as he recoils from faith. His progress and delay in virtue indicate equally his progress and

delay in faith; these two things respond to each other necessarily. To love virtue is to love faith animated by charity, and to love such a faith is to love virtue. Such an effect, which produces itself in the Christian life, and which, since the time of our Lord, has lasted to these days, should excite our admiration, and cause us to reflect; just as the natural effects held the philosophers in admiration, and impelled them to deliver themselves up to the study of causes.

In the first place, then, the effect cannot be more perfect than its cause. If, therefore, the rectitude of the Christian life, which is better than all, depend upon the faith of Christ, it is impossible that this same faith cannot be true. And if it be true, Christ is God, as the Christians confess, and His religion is true.

In the second place, good cannot come from evil, nor falsehood from truth; for evil in that it is evil, and falsehood in that it is falsehood, are nothing positive. If, then, the faith of Christ were false, and if the love of Christ were evil, certainly the Christian life, which is good, could not depend upon it.

Thirdly, if the faith be false, it would be a still greater error; for to say that a crucified man is God, is madness in the extreme, if that be not true. The Christian life being very perfect, how then could it depend upon such a falsehood? Does not moral good come from truth, and every error in the action and the will, has it not as a principle a vice of the intelligence?

Fourthly, the more a nature is disposed, the more it is capable of receiving a perfect form. Now, the form and per-

fection of our intelligence is truth, and the disposition of the intelligence to receive the truth is purity of heart; whence it follows, that the more a man is disengaged from terrestrial passions, the more apt he is to receive the truth and reject error. But we have proved that this disposition is in no degree equal to that of the Christians; if, then, their faith be a lie, they would discover it as easily as others. However, they say nothing of the sort; on the contrary, in proportion as they advance in holiness, they confess their faith with greater energy, and their progress in the faith is always followed by a corresponding progress in the way of virtue. Therefore, their faith cannot be false.

Besides, God is the first mover and prime cause in spiritual things, as He is in things corporeal. It is, then, He who moves human intelligence towards the truth.

Now, it is evident that God imparts the light of truth, as regards salvation, to men especially who by the holiness of their lives are the more disposed to receive it, as are Christians, who, if they erred in the faith, would have no privilege of grace, but would remain abandoned to the seductions of error, which is contrary to the providence of God.

Is not the end, then, the reason of the things which pertain to it? Those who deceive themselves as to the end, deceive themselves also as to the means, for the end is in practice what the principle is in speculation. Now, Christians not having deceived themselves as to the means, as is proved by their perfect life, it follows that they are none the more deceived about the end. Their end, as they unani-

mously confess, is Christ. They force themselves to become like unto Christ, in order that they may one day arrive at the possession of their end (Christ). We must, then, conclude with them that Christ crucified is God.

Besides, God proceeds in all things with order; this is why, in all that He does, He wisely governs inferior things by superior, and produces by the most noble causes the most elevated effects—the cause always being more perfect than its effect. Now, in the order of humanity, there is no effect more noble than the Christian life. This noble effect comes, then, from the most noble cause. Now we know that this effect comes from Christ, and we must therefore confess that Christ is the most noble cause.

Still more. Second causes are the instruments of the first cause. As, then, the Christian life has Christ for its cause, we must confess that Christ crucified is the instrument of the first cause in the production of that effect; so noble the perfection of the Christian. Now, if Christ were not God, as He is so proclaimed, He would be the most criminal, the vilest of men, and God (which is absurd) would have used the most unworthy instrument to produce the most noble life. In the same way, then, the more an effect becomes like its cause, the more it acquires perfection, because the perfection of the effect is in proportion to its similarity with the cause. Now, a Christian becomes the most holy and divine as he follows more closely the traces of Christ, and as he imitates more perfectly His life. Would this be so if Christ were not God, and His faith not true?

In fine, we know the cause from the effects. Now the

philosophers, after having laboured a long time in teaching us the art of good living, have only succeeded in a few points, after so many efforts. They have not, even in the greater number of their disciples, succeeded in producing the virtues with which Christianity practically and at once inspires even women and children.

It is so, because no comparison can be instituted between morality and religion, or Christianity and philosophy. And, in fine, what can be more admirable than to see men, tarnished by all kinds of vices, at length truly converted to Christ crucified, and, at once becoming new men, pass immediately from pride to humility and gentleness—from avarice to liberality—from immorality to the purest life, and the most chaste ; in a word, to practice all the virtues in the place of their contrary vices, and to repair and compensate, by their abandonment of wealth, the injustices they have committed? Has philosophy ever accomplished such a result? It then necessarily follows that Christ is the principal cause, the instrumental cause, and the certain remedy of manners and of life.

CHAPTER VIII.

THAT THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE, THE OBJECT OF OUR FAITH, COMES FROM GOD.

THE reading and meditation of Holy Scripture are the causes of the Christian life, and the foundations of our religion. The truth contained in the Scripture is the object of our faith. After the reasons we have established relative to the faith of Christ, we ought now to place those which come from the Scriptures.

We know, in the first place, that it is impossible to foretell future contingencies, whether by way of experience or by way of doctrine. Hence, even the most illustrious of the philosophers attributed that knowledge to God alone.

For God, being eternal, embraces all things in His eternity, and everything is displayed naked before His eyes. On the contrary, man can only know future contingencies by a Divine revelation.

Now the Holy Scripture in all its pages, and principally in the Old Testament, has predicted not only in general, but also in particular, a crowd of contingent events depending upon the free will of man—events which should take place, not after one or ten years, but a hundred, a thousand years, and even three or four thousand years—events which have happened among the Hebrews, deeds accomplished

by Christ and His Church, the issue of which interested nearly every nation: the Assyrians, Chaldeans, Persians, Medes, Greeks, Romans, and other peoples. Now these predictions being made a long time before the events have been literally accomplished, the Holy Scripture, which contains them, is not then the work of human genius and industry, but the work of God. The predictions which have not yet been accomplished draw their truth from the accomplishment of others, whence we may conclude that God, with a sovereign goodness, extends His providence over all men and things in this world.

It belongs only to God, as we have observed, to foresee future events. It is not, therefore, in the power of man, however foreseeing and sagacious he may be, to disclose or ordain in advance the different actions, wars, and deeds of different great men and peoples, in such a manner that his prediction may be the sign of the event.

God alone has the power to signify with certainty the future by the present. Now we see in the sacred literature that the whole of the New Testament has been prefigured in the Old. It is not possible to say that it is an interpretation invented by the Christians,* and arranged according to pleasure; for it would have been impossible, without the aid of an intelligent prevision, to establish in the two Testaments such an agreement of words, deeds, authors, and of different times. This agreement is no work of hazard, for we remark in it nothing clashing or strange; on

* Paulus, De Wette, Strauss, Bunsen, Hase, Baur, Schwegler, Renan, and even Schenkel, with others of the more modern school of rationalism, assert this.

the contrary, everything is admirably bound together. What is obscure in one place is cleared by another, so that the Holy Scripture in its whole serves as a commentary on each of its parts. Perhaps this may not be apparent to the eyes of those less familiar with the Scriptures; but learned and pious men, who study them diligently, have found in them a pure source of truth, and sweet effusions of grace. Let all those who desire to know the truth, read the Holy Scriptures with piety, with humility, and purity of heart, and they will certainly join with us in this opinion.

After what we have said, it becomes clear that the allegorical interpretation is the only one adapted to the Holy Scriptures. We mean, by allegorical interpretation, not that fabulous interpretation which the poets use (for we also explain parables without drawing any allegory from them).

The sense, parabolic and literal, is that which results not from the words themselves, but from the sense expressed by the words. The allegorical sense contains three things: first, the literal sense; second, the thing signified by the letter; third, the belief insinuated by the facts. Now it follows from this, that such a contexture can be the work of no human art, and that God alone can be its author, by His infinite providence and His infallible wisdom.

In the same manner, the mode of language and development of Holy Scripture is something so original, that it is constantly inimitable to even the wisest and most worthy Christians. The inspiration of one and the same spirit could only have given to so many different authors the same form of discourse. For, in spite of the difference of time, of

education, and of genius, the style of Scripture is always the same, which could only come from God.

This is what is also proved by the effects; for the virtue of the cause is known by the effect. Now there is not upon earth a more noble effect than the Christian life, which, as we have shown in our work on the "Simplicity of the Christian Life," does not result from a natural cause, but from the pure and gratuitous kindness of God. Now, as the doctrine contained in the Holy Scriptures is the principal instrument of the Christian life, it is manifest that this doctrine is not from man, but from God. Experience also proves that human doctrines have been unable to regulate men's lives.

Before the diffusion of the light of Holy Scripture, humanity was plunged into a night of obscurity; but after the preaching of the apostles, after the thunder and lightning of their words, intelligencies were illuminated with the serene splendours of truth and virtue.

But, as one may be tempted to deny the past, let us pass on to the, so to speak, domestic proofs. This kind of proof has always given us more light, joy, and unction.

So from the moment when the preachers of our time, abandoning these means, had recourse to philosophy and the art of rhetoric, they had not so many auditors, nor were they so faithful as in olden times, when, using the holy Scriptures with a simple and familiar language, the preachers marvellously spread light and love among the people.*

* See an admirable history of the various modes of preaching in the supplementary volume to Herzog's "Real Encyklopädie fur Protestantische Theologie und Kirche,"

The faithful were so happy that, in adversity as well as in prosperity, they expressed their contentment by the singing of hymns and canticles.

God is my witness, that whenever I have felt inclined to employ in my sermons the subtleties of philosophy and the fine discourses of human wisdom, in order to convey to the pretended sages and fine spirits of this age some knowledge of the profundity of the Divine Word, I have observed in my audience signs of impatience and weariness, not only amongst the ignorant but even amongst educated men, who only lent a distracted attention to my words. But on every occasion when, on the contrary, I had recourse to the majesty of the Holy Scriptures, either interpreting their sense or reciting the deeds they contain, they all listened with a marvellous attention, and remained before me motionless as statues.

Now I have gained this experience, that, by putting aside tiresome questions and explaining in their stead the Holy Scriptures, the faithful have at all times been enlightened and charmed; and that, after having recognised the truth and felt compunction in their hearts, they have reformed their manners and become better. And now they can no longer support any other kind of reading or discourse, and renouncing the vanities of the age, they become almost divine. This is what also happened in the early periods, when Christianity flourished everywhere, and this is what

under the word "Predigt." The pre-scholastic preaching was very simple, but in the times of Scholasticism the sermons took a philosophic turn, and abounded with citations from Aristotle.

we still see amongst us, in the effects of which we are witnesses.

Such is the doctrine which is said to be "sharper than a two-edged sword;" which has illuminated the whole world with virtue; which has overturned the worship of demons and the sacrilegious oracles of idols; and which, putting to flight innumerable errors, has worked marvels. But we shall hereafter return to this important point.

Let us add now, that our intelligence is so much the more capable of seizing the truth, in proportion as it is the more pure. Hence it comes that the best and purest spirits among men have not only exalted this doctrine in their writings, but have borne witness in its favour by their preaching, their life, and their manners, and frequently have not feared to defend it at the peril of their lives. Certainly they would not have acted in this way if they had not been so struck with its evidence, as if, as we say, they had touched it with their finger.

In the same manner, truth is always in accord with truth; but in the false, all is discord. But every other doctrine, far from opposing ours, only lends it help. The most instructed and experienced scientific men have constantly shown that there is no other philosophy which repudiates it, but that, on the contrary, all philosophy agrees with it with an admirable justice.

This is why it is praiseworthy to Christians to study the sciences, which would not be so if they were likely to injure the faith. We only object to those studies corrupted by superstition; such, for example, as the art of divination, and

other arts, useless or injurious, which have always been denounced by the philosophers, and should not be reckoned amongst the sciences.

If any point of philosophy appear to contradict us, our theologians resolve such difficulties so easily, that it becomes evident that philosophy is the servant of theology; for the easy solution of difficulties is also an evidence in favour of truth.*

Another peculiarity of truth is to shine the more brilliantly the more fiercely it is attacked, provided always that it be well defended. Intelligence has, in fact, truth for its object, towards which it inclines as towards its proper perfection. The more the truth shines, the more it will be loved; and it is shown in all its brilliancy when it is bravely contested, for in the fight it always comes uppermost in victory.

The Christian doctrine, after having been powerfully combated by philosophers and tyrants, has remained invincible; the innumerable works of Christians have produced faith, and, consequently, it comes from God. If not, would it have been able to survive unconquered the assaults of its numerous and powerful enemies?

* This notion is repudiated with scorn by some of the modern school, though Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, and even Comte endeavoured to philosophise Christianity.

CHAPTER IX.

THE TRUTH OF THE FAITH PROVED BY THE PRAYER AND CONTEMPLATION OF CHRISTIANS.

IN the same manner as faith, the reading of the Scriptures, the hearing and meditation of the Word, are the principles of the Christian life, so is prayer the aliment of that life, the source of its growth and perfection.

A long experience has proved that men engaged in praying without ceasing, arrive at a supreme degree of holiness, and that all those who make progress in virtue pray frequently; that by assiduous prayer they fix their will upon God, and all things in this world appear to them empty and despicable.

Now this perfection, the result of prayer, is not only attained by the wise and learned, but the poor and simple attain to it, as well as all those who live in a Christian manner, and it is easy to draw from this a proof in favour of our faith.

First, God being an independent existence, the infinite light, the nearer we approach Him, the more we participate in His purity, truth, and light.

Now, it is not corporeally that we approach God, but by holiness of life, by mental elevation, by contemplation of

the truth; thus the Christian life, which is the purest and most innocent of all, elevates him who practises it, by prayer and contemplation, to God himself. This religion is divine, it is light and truth, since it makes Christians progress in virtue, confirms them in the faith and love of Christ, in proportion as they advance and fortify themselves by the exercise of prayer.

Therefore, intelligence by nature aspires to truth as to its perfection, repudiates error as its evil; now, no interior disposition is more calculated to gain for a good man the communications of truth, and to withdraw him from error, than prayer and contemplation; it is, in fact, in prayer that the true Christian receives those favours. Hence it follows that the faith cannot be false.

Besides, Christians in their prayers addressing God through Jesus Christ, adding at the end of their prayers, "for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ," obtain from God singular favours of grace.

Also, without doubt, God accords to them the principal end of their demand; that is, that purity of life which we see reflected in them, and with it gentleness of spirit, true peace, which they prefer to all the joys and pleasures of this world. But if Jesus Christ were not God, as their faith teaches, they would be plunged into the darkness of error, in spite of the vicinity and serenity of light which illuminates them. Would God permit such an error, and not listen to their prayer nor communicate to them the truth?

Further, every cause, when it disposes a matter to receive a form, gives to that matter, as far as it is capable of

receiving it, the form most fitting; but if not so, it would not dispose even matter, any more than a motor would put anything in motion, without a definite end.

Thus the just man cannot be elevated, so as to render God the homage of his prayers, if God, who is the universal cause, does not elevate him.

Beatitude being the end of prayer, the term of a perfect life, God would not lead any one to pray and to live well if he did not conduct him at the same time to blessedness. Now, since a Christian advances in the faith of Christ in proportion as he advances in prayer and holiness, it follows that that faith can only come from God, and that it is the road by which God conducts man to blessedness.

Further, every cause listens (if we may so express it) to its effect; and the demand, the prayer of the effect, is the intimate desire of its proper perfection—a desire which it expresses in some sort by the disposition which is in it relatively to its cause.

Now, the cause does not delay to answer its effect, and to give it the perfection of which it is capable—a perfection which comes from the cause, as from a source, because good is diffusive of itself.

Now God, who is the supreme good, will, more than any other cause, listen to His effects—that is, to those who are disposed to receive His favours, as are the Christians who pray to Him and contemplate Him. He will grant them what they demand, and the knowledge of the truth.

Now, Christians confirm themselves in their faith as they pray more incessantly; this is also an additional proof.

Besides, if Christ be not God, to believe and confess Him to be God would be a supreme impiety and blasphemy. Since Christians pray to God the Father through Christ, whom they believe to be the same nature with the Father and Holy Spirit, how could God not draw them from such an error which, in that case, could only arise from their simplicity? and how could he not come to the succour of those who pray to Him and seek Him with all their heart? If, on the contrary, their error is culpable, how can He help punishing them for their crime of *lese-majesté;* or, at least, why should He make Himself their accomplice, by according them the favours they demand of Him? In fine, our soul, as we have said, rejoices in the truth, and is afflicted with falsehood, in which it can find no repose.

Now, if the faith of Christ be false, there is no more absurd and dangerous delusion; for that faith is the cause of the wisest and most just men despising the wealth of the world for the sake of Christ crucified, bearing for His sake privation, labour, suffering, contempt, threats, strokes, prison—in fact, all torments, even to death, and wishing for these proofs. Certainly the finger of God is there!

CHAPTER X.

TRUTH OF THE FAITH PROVED BY THE EXTERIOR WORSHIP OF CHRISTIANS.

WE have already shown, by the principal causes of the Christian life, which are faith, the Holy Scriptures, and prayer—the source, nourishment, growth, and perfection of faith—that our religion is true and exempt from all error.

These causes are interior; and therefore it is that we now pass on to speak of the exterior causes of faith, which are the complement of the preceding, and comprise the sacraments and ceremonies which accompany them, and everything which composes the exterior worship of the Christian religion. Not to dwell upon each point in detail, we shall include them all in one body, formed of different members. For all ceremonies accord with sacraments, and the sacraments all accord with the Eucharist, which contains and resumes, in a certain manner, all that we have to say.

Now, whoever observes particularly the prescriptions of exterior worship, retires from them with an increased devotion and sanctity. In fact, since the origin of our religion even to present times, it is proved, both by the testimony and example of the ancients and contemporaries, as well as by the experience of every day, that all those who have

piously and faithfully practised that worship, who worthily regard and receive the sacraments and divine mysteries, acquire a perfection which they had not before, and become more holy and divine; but those who, on the contrary, without faith and without religion, accustom themselves to treat holy things familiarly, become worse than other men. This is what we see principally, without appealing to the past, in the priests and clerks of our own times: if they are good, there is no one better; if they are bad, they surpass all men in wickedness.

The good, purified from all unruly affection for temporal things, attach themselves to God alone, for the love of whom they are ready to suffer death. The evil, absorbed in pride, envy, avarice, and all other vices, arrive at such an excess of impiety that they cannot amend themselves; and admonitions, reprimands, exhortations, instead of correcting them, make them worse. This being so, how is it that two contrary effects should result from the same sacraments and ceremonies? It is no contradiction that two contrary effects should result from the same cause, when there are in the subject contrary dispositions. In fact, the heat of the sun hardens the earth and yet melts ice. A tree planted in the earth produces, under the influence of the sky, flowers and fruit; and if it be torn up, then, under the same influence, it withers and dies. Consequently the two opposite effects of the sacraments do not result from a chimerical or vain cause; but they issue necessarily from the different and even opposite manner with which men use holy things in the worship they render to God. If the exterior worship of the

Christian religion did not depend upon God, if it did not contain Divine virtue and truth, necessary to form a first instrumental cause, it could never produce, maintain, and consummate that excellent effect—Christian holiness. *For it is by itself that it acts in this way, since the Christian life, which is wholly spiritual and partly intellectual, could never be produced by material causes.* Of what avail, in fact, for the perfection of the soul are water, oil, balm, incense, bread, wine, altars, and other things of that kind, if they were not instruments of a superior cause? or rather, if these sacred rites were merely a falsehood of man or demon, a superstitious rite, how could they be the source of such a holy life?

Some one may perhaps object that this worship, of which we speak, is not the cause of the perfection; that it merely exercises the virtues and faith of men who believe it to be divine; that these men, forcing themselves to fly from vice and to practise good works, are sustained by the imaginary belief that they have in this worship, and that by the exercise it imposes upon them they advance more and more. But we reply to this objection by asking, how is it that men, who apply themselves to the rules of probity and moral discipline, without having recourse to the sacraments, come short of this perfection? If the exterior worship were useless and false, the more one avoided it the more perfect he would become; the priests, by treating it without respect, would become better instead of worse; but this is contrary to our daily experience.

And besides, as God is the sovereign truth, the more we approach Him the more we are inundated with His light, and

the more we depart from Him we are enveloped in a greater darkness and error. But do we not know that pious Christians, who devotedly frequent the holy mysteries, receive from that Divine worship such an abundance of joy, that they are ravished beyond themselves. We see their faces, resplendent with the rays of holiness, acquire traits the most amiable and worthy of veneration.

Formerly, doubtless, these marvellous effects were more frequent than to-day. Still in our time we know of men who experience them; men, not only amongst the simple, but amongst the wise and learned. Whence comes this ecstasy? Whence this meditation so full of charms? Whence this fervour, ardent as fire—these sighs and tears—these hymns and canticles, the sweet music of the Church, which escapes from the heart like a jubilation? Certainly, if the worship do not come from God, if it be untrue, where shall we find such mingled delights and falsehoods? For it is all figurative and symbolical; if it were not so, then the mysteries, the sacraments, the temples, the altars, the insignia, the vestments, all the pomp of ceremonies, the chanting of psalms, and the whole service, would be but a vain labour. But this worship is instituted in honour of Jesus Christ. If, then, it be full of falsehoods, the wise and clear-sighted Christian would not be ravished in contemplation, and filled with celestial delights, by meditation on the sacraments and Divine things.

For falsehood, as we have said, is adapted to obscure the intelligence, and to render it uncertain in its ways, and to alienate it from God. Then, as the contrary effect proves,

this worship is true, and filled with Divine graces. This is what the order and sense of the ecclesiastical ceremonies prove; what is revealed by them is not the spirit of man, but the Spirit of God; all is wise, and nothing vain; each thing expresses the mystery contained in it. Therefore, unless a man has a perverse spirit, and eyes obscured by the most dense darkness, he must be compelled to acknowledge that this marvellous worship comes not from man, but God.

CHAPTER XI.

THE TRUTH OF THE FAITH DEMONSTRATED BY THE INTRINSIC EFFECTS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

WE have, as far as our feeble intellect permits, proved the truth of the Christian faith, by reasons drawn from causes interior and exterior of the Christian life. It is now time to pass on to the reasons based upon the effects of that life.

One of the principal effects of the Christian life is peace, joy of spirit, and liberty of heart. For, besides the examples of our fathers, which we read or hear recounted, we have in our days, under our eyes, true Christians, whom the tempests and revolutions of this world do not move; who, on the contrary, glory in tribulation, and remain firm and stable in the confession of the faith of Christ. It is necessary, then, for us to seek out the source of these effects, to explain how it happens that the more one is attached to Jesus Christ by holiness, the more the soul progresses in liberty and serenity. After the Christians themselves, what is the cause of these effects? They say it is this:—"That the blessedness of man consisting entirely in the knowledge and contemplation of God, it is impossible that the desire of man can repose, as in a final end, in anything beneath God." Consequently

the peace and tranquility of mind which they enjoy can only arise from their having founded their life on God, who is their true end. Ask the Christians what is their end, and they will reply, God.

This is the reason why, counting for nothing the things of this world in comparison with God, and hoping after this life to enjoy God, they despise everything in the world and estimate it at no value. They are no longer sad at the loss of temporal things, for not valuing their present life they long for death to possess God, the only and supreme good. And because God is present everywhere by essence, presence, and power, He is also in them by their love and contemplation, of which He is the object, just as what is loved is in that which loves. Now, when the object loved is present, the soul of him who loves delights and rejoices. This is what makes Christians experience an extreme joy at being united to God, of whose presence in them they are conscious; and because God is infinitely powerful from the moment when they feel that He is propitious to them, they count all the rest as nothing. Thus protected by a great liberty and a great confidence, neither caresses nor menaces can turn them from their end. But as man, by reason of temporal things—his great obstacle—and by reason of the feebleness of his intelligence, cannot by the mere force of nature arrive at such a degree of peace and liberty, it is necessary, they say, to attribute the cause to a celestial gift gratuitously conferred upon us, by virtue of which, God and the blessedness He has promised us are ever present.

That such, in fact, is the cause of the peace, the joy, and liberty which the faithful possess; and the proof is in the unity of soul, whose powers are all founded on its essence in such a manner, that when one of its powers is occupied, all are, and cannot be distracted elsewhere. For example, if you are engaged in contemplation, you must leave the other powers in repose; and if you were absorbed by a great sorrow, you could no longer contemplate. Christians are not, therefore, deceived by a false faith, since a power superior to them confirms them in that faith; otherwise they would remain in a mere state of nature, or rather their great error would invalidate their nature. Then how, in the midst of the greatest calamities, of persecutions, of bodily pains, could they maintain inviolably their peace of soul, their joy, and liberty? This would be the case not among a few, but an infinite number of Christians. The philosophers can only mention one or two instances of such firmness; but we can oppose to them thousands of both sexes in every part of the world, who, in the most dreadful torments, have not lost their peace and liberty of heart, having for their succour nothing but the invocation and praise of Christ crucified.

Besides, by the experience of our fathers, and by our own, we have proved that the increase of faith and holiness among Christians was, at the same time for them, an increase of peace, joy, and liberty. Would it have been so if there had not been for their faith and hope, in a word as an end of their religion, a certain good? For the more we advance in holiness so much the more progress do we

make in the knowledge and practice of truth and well-doing, and in the avoidance of their contraries. Consequently, if Christians did not find the true good in the progress of their holy life, neither would they find any progression of their joy; that would decrease in proportion as they found themselves the victims of error.

Still further: every cause, by the goodness which impels it to spread itself abroad, directs its effect towards the desired end. The more the effect approaches the cause, the greater is its repose and delight. Now, God, who is the sovereign good, who deals out His kindness with a lavish hand, directs towards their end all those who turn to Him, in order to procure the repose they wish. This is why the religious life—being the conversion of a man to God—is supreme union, in which are to be found true peace and joy. So that the faithful become stronger in the faith, in proportion as they persevere in their holiness and rejoicing in Christ, repose themselves in Him, despising all the rest to gain Him alone.

The Christian faith, then, is exempt from all error, or the faithful would not arrive at that true peace, which is the object of their desire.

In fine, every joy has for its foundation love—for love is the first act of the sense and the will, and the source of other acts. Now the joy of the faithful which beams on their countenances, arising not from the source of natural and perishable love and from the things of this world, but solely from the love of Jesus Christ, cannot be founded upon error and falsehood, for it would decrease in proportion to their

holiness, for they would soon perceive that they were the victims of a fatal error, and would fall into a mortal sadness. But their holy lives, their joyous faith, their looks, radiant with the beauty of their souls, all demonstrate to us that it is not so; that they love the truth because they have happiness.

CHAPTER XII.

THE TRUTH OF THE FAITH PROVED BY THE EXTERIOR EFFECTS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

ANOTHER effect of the Christian life is that which manifests itself in the exterior of the Christian man in his manners, in his character, which exhale something divine: whence it happens that many are forced to respect Christians, and in some sort to render them worship.

Often their aspect, venerable by its divinity, has caused the most haughty anger to cease. This is what we read of Attila, the powerful and cruel King of the Huns. This man, whom neither the carnage he had made, nor the batallions of the enemy could restrain, was decided by the single prayer of Pope Leo to quit Italy. Attila, contrary to his custom, and to the great surprise of his own people, appeared by this retreat to obey more the order of a superior than a sentiment of veneration. The same is told of Totila, King of the Goths. This cruel conqueror, after devastating the world, could not endure the aspect of a poor monk. Scarcely had he seen St. Benedict than he prostrated his face to the earth, and only got up when bid and assisted. The Emperor Theodosius, returning to Milan from the massacre of Thessalonica, was arrested at the entrance of the temple by

the authority of St. Ambrose, who reproached him with his crimes, and made him expiate them by a salutary penitence.

But the day would finish before I could recite all the illustrious examples of history.

But what is the use of proving what we see every day. It happens, commonly, that the most proud and criminal men all at once change their manner and language in the presence of the saints, and through compunction of heart completely reform their life. For it is the Spirit of God which gives to young men the grace which seduces, and to old the majesty which touches.

The cause of this effect is the supernatural beauty of the soul: it is the grace of God decorating the intelligence, the will, and the other faculties of the soul. The soul acting powerfully on the senses by the imagination, transforms the eyes and visage: now it enflames them, now it abates them: the visage is thus the mirror of the soul—sadness and joy are reflected upon it alternately. Our soul makes use of the body as an instrument: we see upon it the imprint of its passions, especially on the face and in the eyes. The proud have an arrogant look, cruel men a false one. Lightness of character is manifested in the mobility of the lips and the body; sensuality betrays itself in its languishing eyes.* It is said that certain sorcerers fascinate and entrap infants by a single look. In fine, the habitudes of the soul, good or bad, especially when they are inveterate, betray themselves forcibly on the countenance. This is the reason

* Almost verbally from an unfinished Tractate in Aristotle's Works, "*De Physiognomia*," supposed by some to be spurious.

why, as every agent produces its like, and every effect is the expression of its cause, the exterior dignity of Christians, their honest and venerable aspect, can only have as a cause an interior beauty of soul and integrity of life. Such is the power of that exterior, that it serves more than any other to the conversion of sinners, as experience proves. The examples of pious Christians, simple and poor servants of the Lord, have more efficacy over men than the discourses of philosophers and orators, or even than miracles. We have often seen learned and spiritual men command the most favourable attention by their fine discourses; but the life of those men did not correspond with their words; they have been without profit to the Church, and have had no other result than the praises accorded to their eloquence and wisdom. How many miracles in ancient and modern times are there which have served but little in the correction of manners! Men have run to see them, but have not returned better; on the contrary, we know and have seen that many men, as well ignorant and simple as wise and learned, have been converted to God by the sole example of the life of Christians. Many drawn to God by the perfume of holiness and a good fame, despising the attractions and pleasures of the world, have taken refuge from them in the purity of a new life.

After this, it is manifest that Christians have in them a certain virtue which produces all these admirable effects; for the body acts not by itself on the spirit. The proof of this is that certain bodies, especially formal, like celestial bodies, undergo no corporeal action. This is the reason

why the heavens do not suffer by the action of fire which is in its vicinity. For a greater reason, consequently, the spirit by itself is not accessible to the action of the body. As, then, the exterior effects of the Christian life are corporeal, they cannot by themselves act upon the soul to carry it towards the good, without a certain virtue of which they are the instruments. Now in a Christian of approved virtue, that virtue whence issues a perfect life, an exterior beauty and holy example is the immaculate faith and love of Jesus Christ crucified. In proportion as that love augments, the exterior beauty augments also, and becomes more efficacious in the conversion of souls. Therefore this faith which acts by love cannot be deceptive, for falsehood has no virtue capable of penetrating hearts.

Further: truth is more powerful than error. Now no remedy has yet been found more efficacious than the Christian life; as even the philosophers and other men concede those whose doctrines and examples have never won but a few disciples to good living, whilst the Christian life is every day the source of innumerable conversions and the most pure virtues. How, then, could such a perfection flourish on the dead trunk of error. Otherwise, men would be led to the correction of their manners by the doctrine and example of philosophers, rather than by the lives of Christians, which really does not happen.

And once more, God being the first mover, without whom nothing can be moved, and His virtue conducting everything with wisdom, He manifests in the most noble effects the most noble causes. Now, after the interior exhortations

and inspirations, God, to excite men to the practice of a Christian life, makes an especial use of the illustrious examples of the faithful to produce men like Him, in the same way as the heat of the sun and man are the generative principle of man. Then we must necessarily confess that a perfect Christian becomes the most noble cause, and the better instrument to produce the effect of which we speak. Therefore the virtue which co-operates with God is not a falsehood, but a supreme truth. Now this virtue is faith animated by charity. Faith, then, is true.

CHAPTER XIII.

TRUTH OF THE FAITH PROVED BY THE ADMIRABLE WORKS OF CHRIST, AND FIRST BY HIS POWER.

WE have already proved the truth of the Christian religion by the effects which are daily manifested in the Church.

Now, although it would be easy for us to still further confirm its truth by other arguments, yet, for the sake of brevity, we will pass on to reasons drawn from effects which have been produced in the past, and by the consent of the entire world are authentic.

In the same manner as the philosophers have sought the causes of things out of the effects they have seen, we propose also, as an effect of religion, the triumph of Christ, which we have already described, and we will examine as minutely as the subject requires into the causes of that effect. And just as the philosophers, contemplating nature, have apprehended from the admirable order and perfection which reign in the universe that there is a God who is the universal cause, the most puissant cause, the wisest, the most perfect, the first cause, first principle, and first mover of things; so, in the contemplation of the triumph of Christ crucified, we will show that Christ has been and is much

more, than any comparison can express, superior to all the gods of other religions, more powerful and more productive of good works than all those divinities, and that His wisdom and goodness are infinitely above everything, whence it will be manifest that Christ is the great God, the Lord and King, great above all gods.

Let us commence by His power, and recall to the mind, as we have to the sight, the triumph of the Cross.

Now see how we shall argue: either the crucified Jesus of Nazareth, whom the Christians adore, is the true God and first universal cause, or he is not the true God. If we agree to the first hypothesis, all discussion is finished, because then the Christian doctrine and faith are true; if, on the contrary, we hold to the second hypothesis, it follows that Jesus of Nazareth was a man the most proud, the most criminal, since being a man and mortal he wished to pass for a God, and to be so adored by all; so consequently he was a liar, or else it would follow he must have been a fool to undertake such and so great a work. For what could be more mad, more contrary to reason, more ridiculous, than the attempt of a man, who pretends to raise himself against the Divine Majesty, with no other help than abjection and misery—no other weapon than an uncultivated speech—no other hope than an infamous death?

What an idea! to wish to deprive God of His adorers, and to establish a new form of belief amongst men, the powerful, the wise, as well as the simple and ignorant. To wish to reverse all other religions, to give a new career to the world, to change everything, and to cause himself to be

worshipped as a God by a subjugated humanity. To wish this not only during his lifetime, but to wish it to continue after his death—after an ignominious death! To promise to himself adoration and love, to exact from man, as a testimony, the most invincible attachment, a love even to death, and, if necessary, death in the most terrible torments! What an idea, we say, if such a one were no God!

Whoever you may be, I put you this question. If a mortal promised to do everything—if he had conceived such an idea, and began with you first, what would you say? Would you not suspect such a person to be foolish? Would you not simply laugh at such follies? If, then, Jesus of Nazareth is not God, how is that, without any help, this sacrilegious seducer has prevailed against the laws of his country, against princes, against wise men, against the whole universe in opposition to him, against the powers of heaven and hell, in fine, against God Himself, even so far as to make himself equal to God, to receive honours due only to the Divinity, and to fulfil with an infinite success, in spite of difficulties, and the contradictions generated by long centuries, all the prophecies. Why then, O Jews, why did your God, who governs and rules the world, permit such a great and impious crime? And you, Gentiles, I summon you as a testimony. Why did your God not extinguish this rival? How was it that this despised man, who was nailed to an infamous cross, died and was buried, has left after him a force, a virtue, capable of generating so many and so great prodigies? Whoever, I will not say among men, but among those who have passed for gods, can be compared with him? The angers, the

sacrileges, the incestuous loves of the gods of paganism—are not they crimes even in the eyes of their worshippers?

Note, also, from this what imprudence it was on the part of the pagans to compare Apollonius, of Tyana, with Christ: who could compare with Him Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, and other princes of philosophy; or amongst the great kings and captains, Alexander and Cæsar?* No one of them ever called himself God; no one of them has done anything which can be compared to the least miracle of Christ. What has Mahomet done, that clever and plotting Arab chief? Even he never claimed Divinity, but, enlisting in his service the power of the sword, riches, and pleasure, he has won over a mass of barbarous people. Mahomet himself paid homage to Christ, and did not pretend to claim for himself a supernatural power. But such did and such was Jesus Christ. No one has ever, like Him, proposed to men things so difficult to effect and to believe; for He has taught the doctrine of a God, One and Three at the same time, One in substance, Three in person—viz., the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. He has demanded that men should believe in Him as the only Son of God, equal to the Father and Holy Ghost, and at the same time they should believe that He was born of the Virgin Mary; He wished also that the cross, hitherto an instrument of ignominy, should become an object of veneration, and the sign of our salvation. In His last supper He has ordered us to believe that a little

* For a complete examination into these comparisons, often made still by sceptics, and also for an exposition of their defects, see Baur, "Das Christliche, des Platonismas, oder Socrates, und Christus," and "Apollonius von Tyana und Christus." Baur has substantiated the reproach of Savonarola.

bread and wine represent His body and blood, and that we should take it as a nourishment, a heavenly viaticum, as a gage of our life. We ought also to believe, according to His teaching, that no one can enter into the kingdom of heaven unless he be reborn of water and the Holy Ghost. We must add, also, an entire faith, without any mixture of doubt in the Holy Scriptures, to which we must neither add, nor from which deduct anything, notwithstanding the many difficulties the human intellect may encounter.

Now all these beliefs are the express condition of salvation. But it is not enough to believe with a firm and constant faith; we must love the invisible things, and despise those of earth; we must bear all kinds of persecution, for, says Jesus, "ye shall possess your souls in patience." Now Jesus Christ has not promised to His people in this world riches, honours, dignities; far from that, he has predicted for them all sorts of contradictions, poverty, ignominy, persecution, insults, strokes, exile, prison, combats, sufferings; and, as the reward of these generous sufferings, He has promised to give us blessedness, but a blessedness far above our conception, a glorification in heaven with angels, the resurrection of the body; a felicity, in fine, which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man to conceive.

And yet all this which Jesus desired He has obtained, in spite of the opposition of the whole universe. For an infinite number of men of every race and condition have so thoroughly adopted the faith which He preached, and attached themselves to it with so much affection, that they

have preferred to lose life itself than lose this faith. Kings also, and princes, have bowed their heads, and submitted themselves to the yoke of Christ, and obeyed His humblest ministers.

Let us summon up before our eyes this Christ, poor and of ill repute, the son of a carpenter, and ask Him what are His designs, and He will reply—

"I have resolved, poor and despised as you see Me, to submit the world to My laws. I will that men regard Me as really and truly God—God with the Father and Holy Ghost, and that they adore Me as such; I wish that they venerate that cross upon which I am to die an ignominious death, and that they should always be devoted to the offering of My body and blood, *under the appearance* of bread and wine." This is what Jesus of Nazareth would say if we could interrogate Him; and would we not regard such thoughts and ideas in that poor artisan deserving only of pity?

If, in spite of your pity, He continues—

"I wish not only that men should firmly believe what I have said, but that My creed may oblige them to live in justice and purity. I wish that, in view of the benefits I have promised them, they will despise terrestrial things, and, in proof of their ardent love for Me, will suffer privation, thirst, hunger, labour, disappointment, torments, death the most cruel: that they should be eager to suffer, and prefer it to denying My teaching in a single point."

And if He would still add—"I will accomplish all this in spite of the opposition of the world; I must contend with

kings and princes, with all the worship and religion of false gods, with the powers of hell, and I will carry off the palm of triumph"—would you not still deride Him?

But if you were to ask Him what inspired Him with this confidence, what were the arms He intended to use, and He were to reply—"I have only My word and that of My disciples, and because eloquence has always had a certain influence I decline it, lest any one should say I had used it as an instrument. My disciples and I speak without art, our discourses are simple and precise"—would you not regard that as additional folly?

But if He should continue: "I know that a prodigious number of men will suffer death, that there will be an increase of martyrs as the number of believers increase, and that My faith will be propagated to the ends of the earth, and the sceptre of My preaching shall be handed down from age to age in a continued line of successors, and shall never cease,"—would you not call this fanaticism and folly?"

But Jesus would still add: "An immense number of books will be written by wise and learned men for the propagation, exaltation, and defence of my teaching; people shall venerate my priests, whose ministry shall accomplish everything; in fine, I will complete all these marvels as I have predicted, My arms shall be invincible and I shall conquer in the struggle; the universe shall recognise My laws, and never in the long course of centuries shall anyone prevail against the religion I have founded."

Certainly, the work whose success is so firmly promised would appear impossible to man, to nature, and even to

heaven, and possible only to God. Yet, since we see this work is now accomplished, manifestly it must come from God, and the faith of Christ is Divine. Neither the magi, nor the philosophers, nor Mahomet, nor the most powerful kings, nor the gods of the nations have done anything equal to this. Then let the enemies of Christ blush and be silent.

Will anyone venture to say this is the result of chance? It was a matter of prophecy long centuries before its advent; the most ancient monuments, the most faithful amongst the Jews and Gentiles believed in it. It can be found written, that God not only revealed these events, but revealed them with the promise that they should one day be accomplished. Besides, as in nature there are necessary causes, and causes simply indifferent, so, in the order of reason relatively to the intelligence, there are causes which compel the reason to give its acquiescence unhesitatingly, and this is called demonstration; and there are causes also, which are called dialectical proofs, because they only incline the reason to that which is proposed, but do not constrain it.

Some of these latter are so weak as to only give a slight probability. In the mathematics, the least elevated as regards truth, demonstrations abound. In natural sciences, which are a degree superior, they are more rare. In things still higher in the moral order, they are almost deficient. It is so because our minds are so weak that it ignores the distinctive qualities of things; whence it comes that philosophers, being unable to give any positive definition, distinguished things by their accidents. So that the essence

of a thing, or its definition, being the means of its demonstration, it follows that in the moral order there are few rigorous demonstrations. Hence arises the difficulty for a man to confirm his mind in the scientific knowledge of things natural and things moral; more difficult still in things metaphysical; and most difficult in the reunion of the two orders of the intellect and the heart, the intelligence and love, when the question arises about fleeing from vice and practising virtue, for the senses combat the reason, and the will follows it with difficulty. But the highest point of the difficulty consists in so harmonising the intelligence and the heart, the mind and the will,* that there shall ensue from such union abundant fruits of virtue, and that these fruits shall last through life. Amongst philosophers what do we see? As many opinions as masters, the greater number of them not practising what they teach, and, perhaps, not one to be found amongst them who has persevered in well-doing, and remained without blemish to the end of his career. If there should be one we should regard him as a miraculous exception.

If the greatest philosophers have not been able to establish the human intelligence on solid bases as to those truths which reason proclaim, such as the existence of God, providence, good and evil, the practice of the one and the abandonment of the other, and similar truths; if they have not been able to reconcile the will with the mind for the accomplishment of good, nor to prevent their continual

* See Harless' "Christliche Ethik," II. Absch. sec. 25, on the "Erleuchtung des Erkenntniss," and the "Heiligung des Willens."

opposition, how much more has been their failure in the supernatural order of things? But the disciples of Christ, by the single virtue of preaching, have so united the mind and heart of an infinite number of men, they have so bound them, as it were, with nails of iron, to the higher and supernatural truths to which no demonstration and no human reason can attain alone, that these men have regarded earthly things as a vile dung-heap for the sake of the kingdom of heaven, have preserved their faith pure, and, in spite of flattery and menace, have persevered in their knowledge. By what virtue did these simple fishermen, these unlettered men, produce such marvellous effects? Certainly not by human virtue, but by Divine. The ineffectual attempts of the philosophers, indicate the supreme effort of nature. The apostles, therefore, had recourse to another power. How, consequently, if the faith of Christ were false, could these poor fishermen have done so much, and, above all, could have contended so long against such enemies?

And still, if Christ and His apostles have thus, as we have shown, effectively attracted the universe to Divine love, it certainly cannot be through the power of their word alone. Wise and learned men would not have been overcome by their uncultivated speech. Miracles were then necessary to confirm their words. We know these miracles did take place. Their number and their power surpassed human strength and the resources of nature. God alone could have been their Author, for He alone can operate real miracles. Now He cannot in any way testify to error;

He speaks only for truth. If, then, these miracles were done in favour of the Christian faith, that faith is true.

Would you deny the miracles? Then all the world is compelled to admit a far greater miracle than any you deny; for the prodigious effects operated by Christ in the world, those which we have already stated, could He have done them without a miracle, poor as He was, and with no other help than His humble ignorant disciples?

Whether these miracles were or were not done, one thing is certain, that the works of Christ have converted the world, and have infinitely surpassed the power of all false gods. Now the principal cause amongst all causes is that which is the most efficient; like the true God amongst all gods, it is He who prevails against all. Such therefore is Christ, as is proved by His invincible triumph.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE TRUTH OF THE FAITH PROVED BY THE WISDOM OF CHRIST.

LET us demonstrate, now, that the wisdom of Christ has been superior in everything.

The first effect of wisdom is to produce order and good disposition in matters, and to draw from the end itself, to which all things tend, the rule which governs them; for a thing is well ordered when it is well co-ordained to its end. The end of an individual is his well-being. Hence, in the arts, we give the name of "wise" men to those who co-ordain to the end the means of which they dispose.

In architecture, for example, we do not give the name of "wise" to those workmen who prepare the cement, the stones, and the materials; but we call him wise alone whose spirit has conceived and furnished the plan, the supreme form of the edifice. However, this name of "wise men" does not, properly speaking, apply to those who only occupy themselves with this or that art in particular, because they have in view only particular ends, and not the universal end, which is that of life. He then, to speak rigorously, merits the name of wise man, who, considering only the supreme and final end of human life, co-ordains

the most convenient means to that end, and directs towards it all its works.

Now, Jesus of Nazareth, with His disciples and His faithful servants, has alone shown us, in an efficacious manner, by His teaching, the true end of life, the true means of arriving at that end, and He alone has perfectly realised His plan and attained the object which he proposed to Himself. There is not, in fact there never could be, an end more excellent and perfect than that of the Christian life. It is then evident that no one of the false gods, nor among the philosophers, has there been a "wise man" so wise as He.

Besides, ability to teach is a proof that one knows. Now, no one in the world has taught men so perfect a science, nor has taught them so easily as Christ.

The doctrine of the philosophers is obscure; one can only comprehend it after long labour; it is frequently full of errors and difficulties; the masters themselves have often been in doubt and uncertainty about the most important points, as we before remarked, when we were speaking of the Divine providence and the end of life. But after the coming of Christ, our wise Master and Saviour, the world became so well instructed, and so quickly, upon God, His providence, His goodness, the immortality of the soul, the end of life, and the blessedness of man, the means of attaining these things, and many other truths, that amongst the Christians, the very children and the faithful of both sexes, of the most common intelligence, understood all these subjects more clearly than did the greatest philosophers,

with all their genius and long studies; and, what is still more, they remained firm and constant in the doctrine which had been revealed to them, and knew how to defend and keep it intact in spite of punishment and death.

Besides, the virtue of a cause is the greater as it extends further and acts more quickly. The more powerful the wisdom of a being is, the more efficacy it has to change and cure our want of wisdom. Certainly it is no difficult matter to make men wise and virtuous who are endowed with a tractable character and penetrating mind, since they are already prepared for wisdom by nature; that which is difficult, that which surpasses human strength, is to convert to wisdom and virtue the insensate, children, ignorant people, men and women enslaved by sin, harlots, and great criminals.

Now Jesus, our Master, by only one of His graces, has changed the condition of an infinite number of learned and ignorant; He has smitten their hearts with compunction, and they have been converted; and this marvel is accomplished still in our days. What man or what god has ever done that? The wisdom and doctrine of Christ are superior to every other wisdom and doctrine.

In the same manner nature is, in its operations, determined by a particular effect; one conceives that, in natural things, it may be easy to produce an effect by the means of nature alone: for example, every reasonable creature may burn down a house by means of fire; that is not difficult; but it would not be the same if one wanted to burn down a house with ice. The sign, then, of an omnipotent virtue is

to produce natural effects without a natural cause, or with a contrary cause, or at least a cause inefficient to the proposed effect.

This is the reason why, to teach wisdom by natural and ordinary means, as the philosophers did, and in a manner proportioned to the intelligence of man, is not a marvellous thing; but by the folly of the age, that is to say, by the means which the world calls foolish, to teach all men and make them love the highest and most ineffable wisdom, to convert into instruments of wisdom the most despicable means in the world—that is not only difficult but Divine. Well, then, behold the Cross! that infamous gibbet; see the spitting, the buffets, the blows, the torments which Christ suffered in His death, and say if there is anything more insensate and vile than that! But after the death of Christ, behold, all this folly and shame became for the entire world a cause of Divine wisdom: faith teaches it; experience proves it.

There was, then, in Jesus a Divine wisdom which no one else than he had possessed, and of which the world had never before heard.

This is not all. Wisdom, having for its object Divine things, that wisdom will be the most excellent which will the better instruct men in Divine things.

But no wisdom has succeeded better in this way than that of Christ; therefore, this is to be preferred before all others.

That it is so we have the proofs in the writings of the wise men who lived before Christ. Compare these writings

with those of Christians, and you will find that philosophers and other authors scarcely teach us anything. In fact, Christianity has served considerably to augment and perfect philosophy. Christianity has so spread the knowledge of God, that we now find the faithful better instructed on certain points than the prophets themselves. After the preaching of the Apostles, men, knowing their errors, were so ashamed and took so much trouble to purify themselves of them, that we might compare them to unfortunates, plunged all night in the mud, hurrying in the morning to wash themselves and cause the dirt, which covered and disfigured them, to disappear. Certain philosophers and certain poets, blushing for the idols and for the ridiculous, shameful fables of paganism, at the moment when the light of Christ came to illuminate them, were compelled to prop up falsehood by falsehood, and sought to establish an allegorical meaning in their fables. They understood that without this means they would not be able to hide nor excuse to the eyes of men the turpitude and crimes of their gods.

But another prerogative of the wise man is to know and to be able to teach not only every truth, but the most arduous. Now, no one has ever proposed, upon the subject of God, such difficult doctrines, nor taught them with such ease as Christ. He has taught them not merely to a few disciples, but to the entire world. Christians also know how to defend them against their enemies with such a victorious facility, that the study of their books and their arguments ought to produce in the reader the conviction

that the wisdom of Christians is incomparable, immortal and unique.

What has not been done against this wisdom! After the syllogisms of the sages came the cruelties of the persecutors, contempt, menace, the sword, and combat to the death. But Christian wisdom, remaining invincible, triumphed over all. Ah! if the princes and kings had persecuted the philosophers in that manner, what would have become of philosophy? The disciples would have denied, without doubt, even their first principles. But Christ, who proposed to man supernatural truths, humanly inconceivable, has defended his doctrine against the sword and the astute wisdom of the philosophers and false gods, and by doing so has acquired for it a new and invincible force.

Take another argument: either the Christian faith is true or it is false. If you say it is true, we shall agree; but if you say it is false, I can still prove to you that Christ was the wisest and most clever man, since he has discovered truths so high, so arduous, and has been able to persuade men of them so completely, that they have guarded them inviolable against all attack and all reason, human and divine. The Christian doctors, in fact, understood philosophy perfectly. They show that the faith, though supernatural, is not opposed to reason; on the contrary, that all sciences render homage to faith. They do not, like certain ignorant and superstitious minds, reject philosophy nor any real science; but, on the contrary, regard everything that is good and true as their own property, and vindicate it, in the name of right, against its unjust possessors.

Now, who could be so wise, so able to protect a lie against the reasons of so many philosophers and sages, and to show that such lie was in accord with all philosophy? Without doubt truth accords with truth, but with the false all is dissonance. If, then, the philosophers have had so much trouble to protect the truth against their adversaries, and to keep it intact, how much less would they be able to maintain the untrue, which is in itself so weak, against such clever and powerful attacks. Then, suppose that the Christian faith is false, it is necessary to conclude that Christ has been the most sagacious and the wisest man—He who by a teaching above human researches, and in every way sublime, has gained men by an invincible attraction, and taught them by a sort of sacred inspiration to lead upon earth a holy and happy life.

But as that which is in contradiction and combat cannot live in concord, and as it is impossible that falsehood can accord with true philosophy, and that by opposite means men may be conducted to moral rectitude, it is necessary to admit that the Christian faith and doctrine are true, and that Christ supersedes in wisdom all men and all gods.

This, too, is the reason why men, the most instructed in every kind of science, and most recommendable by virtue, have embraced the Christian religion as the source of the most perfect wisdom; have exalted it by their praises, their writings, their deeds; have dilated upon it, and finally have sealed it with the testimony of their blood. Certainly such men would not have suffered these labours, these combats

for the faith, if they had not clearly known that it comes from God.

In the same manner also the virtue of the wise is shown above all in this—that it conducts its disciples to the extreme and sovereign perfection of all sciences by the shortest road. Now this is what Christ alone can do. In fact, every science is either rational or real. Rational science comprises logic, rhetoric, poetry—all things which have reason for its object, and whose end is to convince reason by different proofs and exhortations. Now, this is the object to which Christ, without difficulty, has conducted His disciples. See the proof. Simple fishermen, formerly gross and ignorant, and a crowd of men without intelligence, after having received instruction in the Gospel, have efficaciously persuaded the entire universe, and converted it; a thing which neither the power of arms nor any other efforts of human wisdom could have done.

As to the science which we call real, it is divided into practical and speculative. Practical, is morality itself, and Christ taught it with such facility and promptitude, that the philosophers, as we have said, can add nothing to it. Speculative, is the abstraction of all matter sensible or intelligible, and constitutes that Divine knowledge in which Christ has been so superior to all, that we cannot establish any comparison between Him and the wise men of whom He is the Prince. As to the mathematical science, as it has no connection with salvation, the Christian doctrine does not occupy itself with it, so to say, at all; and if a rule

could be found in it which would be available in the service of life, for its perfection or blessedness, Christianity would at once appropriate it as a right. As to natural philosophy, Christianity conducts us, in a thousand ways, easily and graciously to the end to which it proposes. Natural things are not our supreme end; they are only a means of arriving there. Now, the Christian teaching conducts us to that end with a full and happy security, for it teaches us to see, in all natural things as in a mirror, the admirable image, all beautiful, of the invisible perfections of the Divinity. Then Jesus Christ has been excellently wise; he has, in fact, conducted the entire world to the consummate perfection of all sciences.

In fine, the joys of spirit surpass the joys of sense. Now, the joys of spirit consist especially in the knowledge of truth, and they are so much the greater as that knowledge is more complete. Then where can be found a greater wisdom, and, moreover, a greater mental joy? This is why the sign of the sovereign wisdom of Christ is the sovereign joy which Christians experience in meditating upon and contemplating it.

There is up to now nothing greater. The number of those who contemplate in Christianity the first truth, who have renounced all the pleasures, the favours of these times, and gone into the deserts, is infinite. They have made in this contemplation such progress, that they are no longer men, but angels and demi-gods upon earth. Ravished out of sense, they not only desire nothing terrestrial, but they pay no attention to worldly things; lost in the truth, they

are sufficient to themselves as angels or gods. Now they are, by that, a living proof that Jesus Christ is the veritable wisdom of the Eternal Father, which wisdom could alone accomplish such great things.

CHAPTER XV.

THE TRUTH OF THE FAITH PROVED BY THE GOODNESS OF CHRIST.

WE have shown that Jesus of Nazareth has surpassed in power and wisdom all men and all false gods, so that if it is necessary to give the name of God to someone, it is to Jesus Christ we must give it. It now remains to us to speak of His goodness, and to confirm our arguments by proving that He is the supreme good, and the end of human life. Let us note, at first, that all human actions tend towards one end. Human actions in themselves proceed from the free will of men, who differ in this from beings deprived of reason. Now the object of the will is the supreme good and the end. But as regards the end it is impossible to reckon indefinitely; we must admit one end. It is impossible that two things can by themselves be the end, for beyond the end there is nothing more to desire. The end therefore completes all desire, and leaves nothing more to be desired beyond it, or concerning it; there must therefore be to all men a final end. But we must know that though all men do not formally agree upon this latter end, yet they agree upon it materially, for the idea of an end makes human happiness. All men wish to be happy,

but all do not place happiness as their end. We have already proved that the end of man is the first truth, and first cause—that is to say, God. Now if we demonstrate that Jesus Christ is this final end, we shall have proved that he is the first truth, first cause, the true God, and supreme good, which is according to reason and the final end.

To comprehend this more clearly, we must consider that when a nature is ordained to something as its final end, it cannot be turned aside by the interposition of another nature which impedes the tendency of the first. Thus heavy things tend downwards, and towards the centre, in proportion to their weight. However, the bird by its flight tends upwards, because being an animal it has an active force, which, by the movement of its wings, permits it to raise itself in the air, although by its weight it naturally tends downwards. Similarly, if an inert body contains a great quantity of air and fire, which are in the atmosphere, it will fall only slowly. If, on the contrary, it does not contain them, it will fall rapidly in proportion to its unmixed nature. Man then is composed of two substances, spirit and matter, soul and body, and it ensues that in spite of the natural tendency of spirit and will towards God, that in consequence of the mixture of the inferior portion, the passions necessary to the functions of sense trouble, and frequently draw him farther away than his nature demands; and though a man cannot be drawn away in this manner by force, he is however drawn by the desire of disorderly things, and the intelligence being abused, either by error, or by concupiscence, deceives the will. If then we wish to

ascertain in what consists the end of man in its veritable essence, we must search for it in the powerful tendency of that love and that ardent desire which is in him. Now the nature of man being composed of two parts, sensitive and reasonable, we shall not take any notice of those who live in the manner of beasts, but of those only who, using their reason, merit the title of men. For if I wish to experiment on the laws of weight, I should not use a bird which is capable of flying, but some purely heavy body. Now we proved above that there is no life more pure than the Christian; that there are no men who live so much in accordance with the laws of reason as the Christians; it is necessary, then, that from the love and desire of these men, rather than from the love or desire of others, we should draw the notion of the true final end. All good Christians tend unanimously, by the most ardent love, towards Jesus Christ crucified, as toward their final end, and regard for his sake everything else as vile and worthless, therefore Jesus Christ is the final end, the true God and the supreme good.

Besides, the final end is the full and entire perfection of the man; this is why the proximity of the final end is the measure of perfection. Now there is only one in the world, Jesus Christ, to whom man has been able to approach with so much profit and perfection. We speak here of a spiritual approximation, and the closest; this is, the more the Christian loves Jesus Christ the more perfect he will become. It is then evident that Christ is the end of human life.

Let us add that there is nothing in us more natural than the desire for this end, where in fact we repose immoveably. The final end is, in the practical order, what first principles are in speculation; and in the same manner as first principles are graven by nature in us, so we bear in our soul the desire of the final end, which subsists there immutably. The sign then that a man has attained his end is when he so attaches himself to anything, according to the laws of reason, purified from vice, that to guard this thing he attaches himself to it with a contempt for everything else, and will not abandon it at the price of his life. But although men sometimes choose particular ends, we never, or scarcely ever, see them (except Christians) choose death rather than abandon the end they have chosen. Other men suffer everything to preserve life: man will give his all to lengthen his days; but Christians, on the contrary, think only on Christ; they regard life as nothing; they abandon all for him, not only with tranquility of spirit, but with joy. Then if Christ be not the supreme good, the wisest men would take care not to sacrifice for him life—that treasure more precious than all; they would never immolate it to an error—to the greatest error possible.

In the same manner, beings of the same species have the same end, in which they reunite; as for example, beings endowed with weight tend to the centre. Then Jesus Christ must be the final end of man, for nothing in the world has ever formed such a powerful centre of union as He: *

* Heyel "Phil der Geschichte Einleit:" or, Bohn "Philosophical."—Library Edit., p. 115. "Ehrenfeuchter Entwicklungsgeschichte der Menschheit" cap. xi., "Christus und der Weltgeschichte."

for those who believe in Him tend towards Him, and are united in their tendency as all the terrestrial molecules are united, and form a mass, which from all sides tends to one centre.

It is from this cause that Christians have but one heart and soul in Christ, towards whom they tend, and the more progress they make in the faith the more tightly are the bonds of charity drawn, which bind them together. Now if Christ was merely a man, if the faith were only an impious falsehood, such an effect could never have resulted among so great a number of men of every race and condition. What is united by falsehood is soon separated, and men could never have settled, fortified, and extended such an edifice upon a lying and false foundation. In the same manner, the more spiritual joys approximate to the final end the greater they are, and the joy which the Christian draws from faith in Christ surpasses all the joys of sense. The proof of it is first in the constancy of martyrs. We read that an infinite number of martyrs have gone to execution as to a wedding feast, joyous and gay, leaping with delight in the midst of torments, and singing songs to God. Could this have been so if an immense happiness in the love of Jesus Christ had not caused them to forget their bodily pain, and protected them against all fear.

The same thing is also proved by the erudition of men of science, skilled in all forms of learning, who, having drunk freely at the pure fountain of Holy Scripture, and tasted the sweetness of Christ, have abandoned their sciences, and only found happiness in His teaching. Inseparably attached

to Jesus Christ, they have afterwards regarded the eloquence of orators as insipid. And it is the same in this age, as I myself can bear witness; and it simply proves that the delights which flow from faith, and the contemplation of Christ crucified, excel all others, for their source is in the universal and supreme good; and if we observe carefully, they increase in proportion to our approximation to Jesus Christ.

In conclusion, let us unite in a single reason the properties of the final end: all individuals of one species, as we have said, are ordained to the same end, and all men reunite in the idea of the final end, to which all men are tending who take reason as their guide, and have a pure heart, and where they shall ultimately be united.

Now all these things, which are the conditions of supreme good, man has never found elsewhere than in Jesus Christ: therefore Christ is God and the supreme good.

But what is the use of dwelling so long upon things which are self-manifest. Since the good is naturally diffusive, the supreme good naturally extends itself. But there is no good which has extended so completely and universally as that which is in Christ Jesus; for after the coming of Christ, after the promulgation of His Gospel, the entire world came out of obscurity, purified from the profound darkness of error and vice, and was renewed in youth by the grace of virtue and holiness; and the faithful found in this change such great blessings, that they felt their existence was a perfect happiness. In fact, if there be any happiness here below, the Christians alone possess it, as we have endeavoured to prove in our work on "The Simplicity of the Christian life."

Finally, the incomparable clemency and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ prove the exuberance of His goodness. Not only did he never refuse or delay pardon to sinners who appealed to him, however great were their sins, but whenever they appeared before Him he never failed to give them some precious gift; and in fact, such is our experience, if we alienate ourselves from Him, we are deprived of the sweetness of a pure life, we plunge into sin, we are tormented by inquietude, until at length, when we return to Him, we return also to our primitive peace and joy, just as if we had been cured of the inextinguishable thirst of an ardent fever.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE TRUTH OF THE FAITH PROVED ALTOGETHER BY THE POWER, THE WISDOM, AND THE GOODNESS OF CHRIST.

IN order the better to comprehend what we have said about the power and goodness of Christ, we shall gather it up in a sort of epilogue.

We say, then, that if Christ be not God, as He declared Himself, we must regard Him as the proudest, the most insensate of men. If, on the contrary, it is His disciples who have invented the tale, how is it that such a falsehood could be the source of a power, a wisdom, and a goodness which nothing equals?

Yes, if Jesus Christ be not God, I know not who we can call God. God without doubt rules and conserves the things of this world by convenient means; and as we have proved that there is no other means of conducting souls to blessedness than Christ, I see not how we can escape the alternative, either to confess that Christ is the only means of the blessedness given of God to the human race, or to say that the providence and justice of God do not exist, that all is ruled by chance and destiny, and, in fact, there is no God, which are falsehoods, and therefore we are compelled to admit what we wish to prove.

Besides, if there be in the world a true religion, as it is impossible to doubt after what we have said, evidently this quality belongs to the Christian religion. No other is founded upon such solid reasons, and if Christianity be false, no other religion can be true.

In the same manner we know that no other religion has been persecuted in all times like the Christian religion. Other religions (or more justly they may be called fraudulent superstitions) have had no need of opposition to extinguish them, the weakness of the principle from which they proceeded is the cause of their death; but Christianity, like pure gold, is purified in the fire of persecution, whence it always issues brighter and clearer. Could it have subsisted if it had been false, or if any other religion were true?

Let us add, that it is manifest that Christianity has never been persecuted or contradicted by the just and honourable, but, on the contrary, has constantly received from them veneration and worship, whilst it has always been the butt of the impious and sacrilegious and those of the devil, who is their father; and that all who have persecuted Christianity, or the ministers of Jesus Christ, have been of that iniquitous race, as we still see in our days. But this has not been so with other religions. Shall we, then, by rejecting Christianity, become imitators of those wretches rather than of virtuous men.

There has never been any other religion to which a man has been converted at the detriment of riches, pleasures, and honours, which Christians renounce in their baptismal

vows, since they profess to be called to contumely, abstinence, poverty, suffering, and, if need be, death.

Without the light of an evident truth, which penetrates the heart, no one not demented would oblige himself by such promises.

Therefore, by these and other similar reasons, we are compelled to believe that the admirable faith of Christ is true.

If a single argument, or only two or three proofs will not force your assent, all the proofs we have given, united together, will have no more power than mathematical demonstrations, or the resurrection of the dead, to bring conviction.

But if the Christian religion be true, he must repel all other religions as false, for it teaches that out of its bosom there is no salvation. And in that, it is reasonable, because our salvation, consisting in the vision of God to which no one can attain without a supernatural gift, it is impossible also for any one to attain to salvation, the Holy Scripture telling us that without faith it is impossible to please God.

Consequently, there is no room for excuses for those who are in countries where the light of Christian faith does not shine; for anyone taking the natural light of reason as his guide, which deceives no one, will turn with a pure heart and intention towards the Father and common Artizan of all things, whose virtue is manifested everywhere in the admirable order of creation, who also succours the necessities of all creatures, and will ask of Him grace to

know the truth, he will never be frustrated in his prayer; but, whether by an interior inspiration, like Job, or by the ministry of angels, as the centurion Cornelius, or by an apostle, as the Eunuch, he will obtain the light necessary to salvation.

BOOK III.

PREAMBLE.

WE have clearly demonstrated the truth of our holy religion, as well by past events as by the present deeds of the Church. Now as it is not sufficient merely to construct an edifice, but we must also defend it against all attacks, it remains, then, to reply to the enemies of our faith, by pointing out that it contains nothing impossible, nothing unreasonable, for although it believes and teaches many super-rational things which are consistent with Divine power, it admits nothing contrary to reason; but still more, since the mysteries of religion surpass by far the force of human intelligence, it is very reasonable to admit them.

But, to proceed with order, we shall speak first of the articles of faith, which are the very foundation of religion; we shall then expose the order and reason of the moral precepts; in the third place, we shall demonstrate the reason of the laws which religion uses in its judgments; and, in

conclusion, we shall explain the sense of the symbols and ceremonies of the Church.

Although excellent doctors have treated all these questions in an elegant, abundant, and complete manner, yet this third book will not appear useless, because it is evidently a necessary consequence of the two others, and because the teachings of our masters are sown here and there in long and learned writings; we have, therefore, collected and abridged them in this little book, and placed them within the reach of a great number of intellects, wishing thus to be useful not only to educated Christians, but also to those who have only a feeble knowledge of letters, and to infidels even, who may also be attracted by the brevity of the book.

CHAPTER I.

EVEN by the weakness of our own intelligence we can comprehend that in God all is infinite, for everything reveals His power in its supreme effort; therefore we can know the force of human intelligence by the works of the greatest philosophers, since all the world avows that their intellect has made a supreme effort.

However, it is certain (as the philosophers themselves ingenuously recognise) that the greatest among them have only a feeble, uncertain, and laborious knowledge of the things of nature; then if all the power of the human mind has not been able to know perfectly what is the domain of man, so much the less will it be able to attain to a perfect knowledge of the celestial essence, still less to the knowledge of Him who is infinitely above all. Besides, if we see amongst men some with a spirit so obtuse that they can never comprehend certain truths which other men comprehend, can we be astonished that celestial beings, whose natures are higher than ours, understand many truths to which the force of our comprehension cannot attain? What shall we then say of the Divine intelligence, who in His inaccessible light, infinitely surpasses all intelligence? Causes reveal themselves by their effects; however, when the causes are eminently superior to their effects, the effects only give an imperfect

knowledge of their causes. Then, since God, as a cause, is infinitely superior to all His effects, which are also imperfectly known to us, it follows clearly, that by virtue of natural light we can have but a feeble knowledge of God, almost none. It is easy to demonstrate that God might make an infinite number of things which we cannot comprehend. In fact, all our knowledge commences with the sensation, and it develops itself in us only by means of things sensible, for our mind is so necessarily bound to the natural order, that it can consider nothing out of that order. Everything that our mind thinks is represented by the images of natural things, for it can see nothing without the phantoms of the imagination. But God is an independent existence and infinite power; He is not bound to the order of nature, however excellent that order may be, for it is senseless to affirm that God can do nothing that we are not able to comprehend, especially when in the creation He has made many things which are an impenetrable mystery to us, like those which belong to the spiritual nature.

Formerly the Divine goodness revealed to many men the Divine mysteries which human reason cannot penetrate. He made also many supernatural things, that man, who is co-ordinated to a supercelestial end, should know and thus be able to reach even to Him. Mainly by this revelation, which has permitted him to see a few rays of that eternal sun, of which he cannot comprehend all the splendour, man has comprehended his end, and the means to attain to it. He knows his own infirmity and misery by considering the incommensurable abyss of the Divine Majesty. From this

revelation he has drawn great knowledge of God, and greater joys; therefore, what our religion orders us to believe is neither ridiculous nor absurd, although our reason cannot comprehend it; but they rather are absurd and ridiculous who, for disbelieving, have no other motive than their own blindness.

Let them read and meditate this book with a desire to learn, and not to cavil; they will then know that religion proposes nothing impossible or contrary to reason. But to make it more clear, we will descend from the general to the particular.

CHAPTER II.

ON DOCTRINES WHICH ARE ABOVE THE INTELLIGENCE OF MAN.

THERE are dogmas relating to the Divinity of Christ; others relating to His humanity.

Of the dogmas relating to the Divinity, the first concerns the Divine unity, for all confess that there is but one God, and that is the first principle of the doctrine of the Church—a principle which an enlightened reason, not less than faith itself, compels us to admit, as we have shown in the first book of this work.

The second article concerns the unity in the Trinity, and these two articles or principles relate to the Divine essence. The others relate entirely to the works of God, in the order of nature, of grace, and of glory; for we affirm that God created the world—that is to say, that He created everything. We believe that God sanctifies the reasonable creature by the means of supernatural gifts, to draw it to Himself; and we confess that those who have been sanctified in this world are, after their death, glorified in heaven, where they enjoy eternal blessedness. The sixth article promises us the resurrection of the flesh, and we have the sweet hope that we shall all rise and take up our bodies as a vestment of glory and immortality.

As regards the immortal glory of Christ, we believe that Christ is the true God and true man, Son of God, and of the Virgin Mary, who conceived Him by the operation of the Holy Spirit, preserving her virginal purity. We confess, also, that He suffered for us; that He died and was buried; that He descended into hell to deliver from their prison the souls of our fathers, and, after breaking the chains of original sin, to conduct them triumphantly to eternal glory. We say that He rose from the dead, that He ascended into heaven, and sat Himself on the right hand of the Father Almighty; that one day He shall come to judge the living and the dead, and to renew the world. Thus the whole of our faith is contained in twelve principles, which we call articles. We are further held to believe all things contained in canonical and sacred books, as the Church has ordered. And thus proceeding in the same manner, we shall show that in these articles of faith there is nothing impossible or contrary to reason. We shall speak also of the Eucharist, which is not less a mystery than the others; and as that sacrament sanctifies the reasonable creature, it may be referred to the chapter on sanctification, though that chapter contains at the same time the humanity of Christ. We shall speak again of this sacrament, when we treat of the ceremonies and other sacraments, since the sacraments hold the first place among the ceremonies of the Church; but as in the first book we have sufficiently spoken of the unity of God, and as the most eminent philosophers admit it with us, we shall not dwell further upon it here.

CHAPTER III.

THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION AFFIRMS NOTHING CONTRARY TO REASON ON THE MYSTERY OF THE TRINITY.

PUTTING aside, therefore, the first article as being universally admitted, we will commence with the second, which is the most difficult to believe, since it proclaims the unity of the Trinity. We confess, in fact, three persons really distinct; we say that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, are one sole God, and not three Gods united by the bond of charity, as some have pretended, nor one in a collective unity; we say that God is *one*, of a nature simple and infinite.

Against Sabellius we affirm, with the Church, that there are in God three persons really distinct; and against Arius, that these three persons are equal in nature, in power, and in glory, in such a manner that all that is in the Father is also in the Son and Holy Spirit, and that thus amongst three Divine persons there is not the same distinction as between creatures who distinguish themselves from one another, in that one person has something which the other has not. We say that between the three Divine persons the distinction is only relative in this sense, that all that pertains to the Father pertains also to the Son, and what pertains to the Father and the Son per-

tains also to the Holy Ghost; but that the Father holds all by Himself, and that the Son holds all from the Father, and the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son, though still for this reason one is not inferior to the other, for the three persons in relation to the Divine essence are *One*, and one cannot exist nor be conceived without the other; and hence the Son is not posterior to the Father, nor the Holy Ghost to the Father and the Son. We admit no composition in God, when we say the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, seeing that they constitute one sole and same thing, which is the Divine nature. They are distinguished personally, but they are but one spiritual substance, and in that is the mystery that three persons should be one God, and yet the three persons are distinct; they are distinguished in person, and are one in substance; but because we name things according to the knowledge we have of them, and because we know God by means of His creatures, we name Him also with a term borrowed from His creatures. Now, when one living creature proceeds from another living creature in the same nature and species, this procession is called generation, and the creature who engenders is called the father, and that which is engendered is called the son; and because with the Divine persons one person proceeds from another by way of intelligence, this procession is called by us generation, and the person from whom the other proceeds is called the Father, but that which proceeds is called the Son.

Nevertheless, in the Divine persons we do not understand generation in the same sense as applied to men and animals; in God generation is wholly spiritual, and we say that the

Son proceeds by way of intelligence, and that He is the word, the image, and wisdom, engendered by the Father. But the Holy Spirit proceeds by way of love, for love is the link which unites the person loving to the person loved; but because in nature we find no being which proceeds equal and immediate from two beings equally perfect, in the same way as the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, we cannot find for the procession of the Holy Spirit a special name, as we have found to express the procession of the Son: this is why the procession of the Holy Spirit has retained the general name of procession. Yet we say that the Holy Spirit proceeds by way of love, or of will. Relatively to the Father and the Son, that procession is termed *spiration*, for love presupposes a certain ardour and aspiration towards the thing loved; this is why the person who proceeds from the Father and the Son is especially named the Holy Spirit, although the Father is equally pure Spirit and Holy, just as is also the Son. Consequently the two names given to the person of the Holy Spirit express simply a relation, though the sense of the words may not appear to express it. Then, as in the spiritual nature, there are only two interior processions, the one on the side of intelligence, the other on the side of will, faith admits with reason two processions, and three persons in God.

We might still extend our remarks on the mystery of the Holy Trinity, but as what we have said hitherto belongs exclusively to the faith, we shall say no more upon it.

He who desires to be instructed in this ineffable mystery, should read with purity and simplicity of heart the works of

Christian writers. He will find in them an inexhaustible treasure; but for us it will suffice to demonstrate that the dogma of the Holy Trinity implies nothing impossible, nothing contrary to reason. Nevertheless, man will never be able to attain to the knowledge of the Divine persons by natural means, because by means of His creatures we know God, but only as a principle and efficient cause of things created; but the principle of things created only manifests itself by its power, which is common to the three persons: therefore, by means of His creatures, we know of God only what is common to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; then by the notion of mere creatures we cannot attain to the *distinction* of the Divine persons. But for want of power to seize this distinction, let us take care not to deny the holy mystery as it is revealed, for it would be folly to hold as true only that which does not surpass the level of our intelligence, since there are in God, as we have already shown, an infinity of things which are for us impenetrable mysteries. Besides, although in the preceding book the arguments by which we have proved that our faith reposes on truth, confirm our belief in the dogma of three persons in a Divine unity, we will give here some especial proofs to show that not only this dogma contains nothing improbable or absurd, but that it has considerable analogy, fitness, and similitude with the things of nature.

As the effect is impelled to imitate the cause, we can, by the procession we find in nature, elevate in some measure our understanding to the apprehension of the Divine processions. Now in nature, processions are more perfect in

proportion as they are more intimate; in fact, in things inanimate there is often a procession. Thus fire proceeds from fire; but this procession has its principle in the virtue of that element which acts upon an exterior matter, whence the procession is less intimate, and consequently less perfect. In vegetation the procession is more perfect, because that which is produced is one (at least at the commencement of generation) with the generating plant; but it finally separates itself. In animals the procession is still more perfect, more intimate, and more spiritual. Thus the sensation resides in the senses, and escapes not beyond; but as it issues from an external object, the procession is not perfectly interior; but in the intellect of a man the procession is more intimate, and consequently more perfect, because the active intelligence reflects upon itself (is self-conscious), whence it ensues that man can contemplate his own ideas, can conceive internally the Word of his thought, and smitten with love for the thing conceived, can figure in himself a Trinity of persons—namely, the Intelligence, the Word, and Love. However, this intellectual procession commences with the senses, and, like all our knowledge, depends upon external objects.*

Then, since processions are the more perfect as they are more intimate, and are more intimate as the creature is more noble, and as the effect is impelled to imitate its cause, in what consists our absurdity, when we affirm that in God, who surpasses infinitely all creatures, processions are infinitely intimate and perfect, since they do not proceed from

* "Nihil est in intellectu quod non fuerit in sensu."

without, and do not differ from the substance of God, and that all creatures are impelled to imitate Him, though only imperfectly?

Thus the Divine persons depend upon no cause, being themselves God, who is the first cause of all causes, and they are distinct, for from the procession of one to the other there necessarily follows a relative opposition and distinction.

If the procession be real, it is necessary that relation and distinction be equally so; but in Divine persons relations do not imply any imperfection, seeing that relation is not a thing, but simply the connection of one thing with another.

In the spiritual part of man, who amongst all beings of nature has the most resemblance to God, we find a sort of Trinity, namely intelligence, word, and love; for whilst man actually elevates his intelligence towards God, he conceives the word, and is inflamed with love for it.

However, this Trinity is very different from the Divine Trinity; for as God is immutable and eternal, and as in Him nothing is imperfect, His word and His love are not, as in us, accidental, which now come and now cease; but from all eternity the word and love are with the Father one and the same substance. We may see, therefore, by this, that faith in the mystery of the Holy Trinity has in it nothing absurd, but that it is rather conformable to right reason.

We find still numerous vestiges of a Trinity in all creatures; all have a commencement, a middle, and an end, and in this there is one substance and one operation, and other things similar, which are as it were a type of the Trinity.

Aristotle, the prince of the Peripatetics, appears to give his support to this opinion, when, guided simply by the natural light of reason, he speaks of the ternary number in the commencement of his book, entitled "Heaven and Earth." "All beings," says he, "have their perfection in the number three," and he cites the opinion of the Pythagoreans, namely, "that everything has a commencement, a middle, and an end, and that thus everything is determined in the ternary number;" and he adds, "that this number, received from nature, has been transferred to the worship of the gods." In the designation of persons, "two do not express all the persons, but three do—I, thou, he. But *the whole*, and *the perfect*, are the same thing." This philosopher still adds, "that bodies are perfect in extent, since they have three dimensions—length, breadth, and thickness."

From all these considerations, it follows that faith admits nothing impossible or unreasonable on the mystery of the Trinity. For that this mystery cannot be comprehended by our intelligence, is in itself an additional proof that faith in the Holy Trinity *is not a human invention.* If it proposes concerning God things impenetrable, it certainly proposes nothing contrary to the principles of sound philosophy; but, rather, all the principles of philosophy come to our aid, and render the solution of the question of faith easy, which is the greatest proof of truth.

CHAPTER IV.

THAT THE CHRISTIAN FAITH AFFIRMS NOTHING UPON CREATION THAT IS IMPOSSIBLE OR CONTRARY TO REASON.

AFTER having considered the Divine nature, we must speak of creation by commencing with natural being. Now we believe that God, at the beginning of time, created everything; that is to say, that out of nothing He made things both visible and invisible.

This belief cannot be regarded as strange to reason and truth, since all confess that God is the first efficient cause of heaven and nature. Now the efficient cause gives existence to its effects, but every act is so much the more fecund and more extended as its cause is more perfect; and as God is an independent Being, it follows that the power of God extends even to the bestowal of existence upon all beings which depend upon Him. Besides, although the act is posterior to the power, in the sense that power is reduced to action, yet the act, considered absolutely, is always anterior to the power, for power cannot be reduced into an act but by something actual. Then, as God is the necessary being, and therefore independent, as was demonstrated in the first book, it is necessary to say that He precedes all that He has created. Further, we are forced to confess

that He has made all things out of nothing; that is to say, without having any need of other pre-existing matter.

In fact, the particular agents in nature and art pre-suppose matter, to draw something from it, because it cannot create substance itself, but can only give it a certain form; but God, who is the universal cause, *simply* creates, for the universal effect corresponds with the cause, who is simply Being. Then nothing exists which has not been created by God, therefore we cannot suppose anything previous to the action of God, for if matter be supposed pre-existent to the Divine action in the universe, it is God who has made that matter, or not. If He has not made it, then He is not the efficient cause of all that exists, a proposition we have already refuted; if, on the contrary, He has made it, He has made it of nothing or of something. If we confess that He has made it of nothing, we have gained the cause; if we reply that He has made it of some other thing, I ask whence comes that other thing, and if God is the creator of it or not?—which is to return to the same question, and thus indefinitely and without end, which would be absurd; or we must confess, which is more reasonable, that God created everything out of nothing. But because God does not act by necessity of nature, but by His own will, as we have already shown, it is not necessary that the world should have been created from all eternity, but at the time the Divine wisdom has judged most convenient and most useful to His designs.

This convenience, and this utility, may still be demonstrated by a few reasons; in fact, God made everything for

the good of His elect, and this good consists in knowledge of God. Now God has given a more perfect knowledge of Himself in not creating the world from all eternity, for we can now see that He is so perfect that He suffices to Himself, and has no necessity for any creature; and if He had a necessity for any, He would not have deferred creation for such an infinite time.

What we have now said about creation suffices; besides, there are a number of writings upon the subject easy to be found. The reasons by which Aristotle, and the greater number of the philosophers, were forced to prove the eternity of the world, are easily refuted by our theologians, and even by those who are but little versed in these questions.

CHAPTER V.

THAT THE CHRISTIAN FAITH AFFIRMS NOTHING IMPOSSIBLE OR CONTRARY TO REASON, UPON THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE REASONABLE CREATURE.

AS regards the sanctification of the creature by the supercelestial gift of grace, I do not believe we need add to what we have already said upon the end of man, and upon the means of its attainment. For we have shown that man has been ordained to a supernatural end, to which he can never reach without a supernatural means, that is, without the Divine grace, which God accords to those who prepare themselves to receive it worthily, for God accords to all His creatures necessary things. We have also spoken of the glory of our soul, when we proved that the soul finds supreme felicity in the vision of the Divine essence by the light of glory.

By all that has preceded, we can easily comprehend that the Christian faith affirms nothing on the sanctification of souls which is not full of reason and wisdom.

Also concerning the resurrection of the dead, we affirm nothing impossible or unreasonable. In fine, although the resurrection could not have taken place naturally, because nature has a determined mode of operation, yet, as we have

already shown, the Divine power is infinite, and in no way bound to that natural order; it follows, therefore, that the resurrection of the dead is not only possible, but very easy to God, for if He has produced everything out of nothing, what natural agencies could not do, much more is He able to make of anything which already exists something else, and therefore to render back life to the dead.

For man is not annihilated by decease.* His soul is immortal, as we have shown in the first book, and, moreover, the matter of the body remains incorruptible. But if, on the other hand, man perished entirely, the Divine creator of the universe could still give him life and an existence, with the same facility as He made everything out of nothing.

Therefore, what we believe on the resurrection of the dead is not only possible, but appears expedient, reasonable, and necessary; for if the intellective soul is the form of the body, and if it be immortal, as we have proved it to be, it will be against the nature of the soul to be separated from the body: now that which is against nature cannot be permanent, for it would be contrary to Divine wisdom, therefore the soul will be reunited to the body. Besides, the soul can have no perfect existence without the body; now everything which is imperfect aspires to its perfection, and if the soul be not reunited to the body, then—consumed by that desire, which nothing can extinguish, because it is natural—it could never be perfectly happy, seeing that supreme happiness excludes all desire. So that it is rea-

* Butler's "Analogy," cap. i. Schlegel "Phil. of Life," sec. iv. Delitzsch "Biblical Psychology," Chapters on death, part vi.

sonable to confess the resurrection of the dead. And, further, blessedness is due to him who has lived well; now in this mortal life it is not the soul alone which lives well, but the whole man; it is to the entire man we attribute human functions, for it is the organs which operate, and the soul is nothing else than the *form* by which they operate; therefore blessedness is due to the entire man, and consequently a resurrection of the body is necessary.

Besides, it belongs to Divine providence to recompense the good and punish the evil in the soul and in the body, seeing that the good suffer much in this life, that they afflict and macerate their bodies, and that the evil, on the contrary, abound in delights and pleasures, prevail and triumph; then if God, who exercises over all a most exact providence, will never leave the good without recompense, nor the wicked without chastisement, it is necessary that bodies rise, in order that they who have concurred in good or evil may also receive their merited recompense or punishment.

It is equally reasonable to believe that men will rise immortal, for if they were to die again it would be necessary, for reasons we shall show, that they should rise again; and if once more they were to take mortal bodies, for the same reasons another resurrection would be necessary after death, and we must admit of an infinite series of successive deaths and resurrections, which would be absurd; or else it is necessary to affirm that souls in the first resurrection are united to immortal bodies, and that the inviolable perpetuity of the body is accorded to the felicity of man, which is conformable to reason. But because matter must be in strict

relation to its form, it would be unworthy to imagine that the happy soul should be united to a vile and despicable body, when it would itself be inundated with splendours of glory, decorated with supernatural qualities, and endowed with perfection. This is why, by the virtue of God, the soul will reflect itself upon the body, so that it may shine like the sun in the kingdom of God, and become agile and prompt to obey the soul, and that nothing may fail to the felicity of the man; and as all bodies have been made for man, and man is the final end of nature, it is reasonable to say that man, being glorified, all the universe will be glorified equally, and that it will receive a new illustration, in order that all things may be in relation or proportion with the end for which they have been made; and because man will have no more need of aliments, and will be no more subjected to the necessities of the body, it is reasonable to affirm that the heaven will no more have its circular motion, that animals, plants, all the mixed beings, will resolve into their elements, and that, purified by virtue of fire, which is supremely active, they will be reclothed in new qualities, and for ever inundated in a new and glorious brightness, and will be eternally happy with God.

CHAPTER VI.

THAT THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION SPEAKS REASONABLY UPON THE PUNISHMENT OF THE DAMNED.

AS the glory of heaven belongs to the blessed, the damned, who have continually kept themselves far from God, will inhabit, in perpetual expiation of their crimes a deep place, a prison tenebrous and subterranean.

It cannot appear strange that the damned should suffer perpetual punishment, for in the same manner as human justice is exercised in the city of man, so is Divine justice exercised in the city of God. Now human justice separates certain criminals from the republic for ever, by exile or by death; so also Divine justice rejects wicked men for ever from the communion of heaven, not so much for one fault committed in time, as for the infinite revolt of their will, and their obstinacy in crime itself; for it is just that those who have preferred passing pleasures to eternal glory, and would have lived eternally in the mire of vice, if they had been able, should be punished eternally, in order that their chastisement might be equal to the crime of the will, at that time, above all when man has arrived at the end of his terrestrial activity, and has no longer the power accorded in this life to follow to his final end. Therefore, because

men in the resurrection will have come to their end, and will no more be called to recommence the road of probation, the wicked will go into eternal punishment, and the good to eternal glory; and because, as it has been said, it is not the soul alone which operates, but the entire man, and that in glory blessedness belongs to the soul and body, it follows that in the punishment the damned must have as a companion the body which they have had as an instrument and goad to error; and although there is in hell other punishments than that of fire, still, because that element is the most active, the punishment by fire is named as the principal. But it is necessary to know that the bodies of the damned, though not glorified, will not be consumed by that fire, seeing that, by Divine virtue, the bodies of the damned will be so united to the souls that they will not be dissolved nor altered. And because the condemned soul has turned itself from its Creator by an oblique and perverse will, it will no longer have empire over the body, and thus it will be tormented by a material fire, and that fire by a mysterious property will oppose itself to the natural harmony of the senses, and it will for ever trouble the union between soul and body, without being able to dissolve it.

CHAPTER VII.

THAT THE DOCTRINE OF THE INCARNATION PRESENTS NOTHING IMPOSSIBLE AND UNREASONABLE.

THE Christian religion affirms that the Son of God is God and man together, and that His person subsists in two natures, viz.:—the Divine nature and the human: that there is between one and the other a union so intimate that the same person is God and man.

Now amongst created things nothing can be compared to this mysterious union. In fact it is not like the aggregation of molecules to molecules, which constitutes the substance of the stone, for in this hypothesis God would not be man, or man would not be God.

It is not the union of parts upon which the whole depends, for Christ, as God, depends on nothing. It is not like the union of elements in composites, because that is contrary to the Divine nature: it is not like the union of soul with body, seeing that the Divinity cannot be the form of a body.

This Divine and admirable union surpasses, therefore, every created virtue; for in every substance one finds a nature and a proper person. Now the holy faith teaches us that the human nature in Christ has not a proper person, which it would have had without doubt if it had not been

united with the Word (*Logos*) of God, whilst it is still the Divine person which subsists in the human nature of Christ, seeing that the person of the Son of God has taken it by uniting it to Himself at the first moment when that nature was created. But the person subsisting in the human nature is man, and in the Divine nature, God; then since the person of Christ subsists in one and the other nature, the Christ is really God and man together. Now this is neither impossible nor unreasonable, seeing that God can do everything that does not involve contradiction.

In fact, the Divine Majesty has not experienced any change by this union, but the human nature was elevated by it through the infinite power of God, which can accomplish more than human intelligence can comprehend. It appears equally reasonable to believe that from this incarnation of the Divine Word there has come to the world innumerable benefits, as experience proves, for after the coming of Christ a new sun rose upon this world, and the darkness of error was dissipated. As it would be difficult, not to say impossible, to enumerate all these benefits, it will suffice us to recall some to demonstrate the reason and propriety of the Divine Incarnation. First, it was a very efficacious succour to conduct men to blessedness, because, as we have demonstrated, the supreme felicity of man consists in the vision of the Divine essence. Now in considering the grandeur of God and his own insignificance, man would have despaired of that ineffable vision. God has wished to unite human nature to His Divine nature, to prove to mortals that the union of our intelligence with heaven is not

impossible, for the union of the human nature with the Divine person is still more astonishing.

After the Incarnation man began to emerge and aspire more ardently to true happiness.

Then by grace of the Incarnation of the Divine Word he came to know the excellence of his nature, and understood that he had for an end, God Himself, who in creating him immediately elevated human nature. After this marvellous union had appeared in the world, many renounced the worship of idols and all creatures. They despoiled themselves of their riches and honours, and trod the pleasures of the world under foot, to consecrate themselves to the worship of the true God.

As our blessedness consists in the vision of God, which exceeds the power of our understanding, a certain knowledge and hope of such blessedness could not be acquired by the sole light of reason, as the labours of the philosophers, who failed in this investigation, prove. This is why God, who exercises over men an especial providence, took our flesh to give us a firm hope of this supreme good, for no one can doubt the word of God. Also, since the coming of God, we see that men have acquired a much greater knowledge of Divine things than they had before.

It would be necessary then that men, freed from the yoke of the flesh, should be inflamed with love for the celestial blessedness, which did so happen by the Incarnation of our Saviour, for His love was the most capable to excite our love, and His Divine charity towards men could not manifest itself more effectually than by the ineffable mystery of

the Incarnation, and by the sacrament of love. This is why, since that august Incarnation, we have seen men, inflamed with a more ardent love for Divine things, contract, so to speak, an intimate alliance with God; and, further, as there is necessary to those who aspire to this blessedness a certainty of the means which lead to it, this certainty was given to them by the Incarnation, which is proved by the consideration that the world has flourished more than formerly in virtues, and, in fact, was elevated to a spiritual life,* for God-become-man, having instructed us Himself by His words and example, no one can doubt that the way which He has taught us is that which most surely conducts us to true felicity. Therefore this faith contains nothing impossible or unreasonable in the mystery of the Incarnate Word.

* This point that Christ inaugurated a new and spiritual life in the world is generally admitted. For a full development of the subject, an extraordinary chapter on "Christianity as a new principle of development in the world's history," in Baur's "Paulus der Apostel," might be read with advantage. Though written by one who is accredited with doing more than any other man of his time to destroy the foundations of Christianity, yet this chapter, in a book which reduces the history of Paul to a mere skeleton, is a masterly exposition of the supernatural influence of Christianity upon human life and destiny.

CHAPTER VIII.

THAT THE BIRTH AND LIFE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST CONTAIN NOTHING IMPOSSIBLE OR CONTRARY TO REASON.

AFTER all that has been said, it will not be difficult to prove the possibility and propriety of the Articles of the Creed. If God could make Himself man, He could also cause Himself to be born of a virgin, for it is not the nature which is generated but the person who subsists in the nature itself; and, as in the human nature subsisted the Divine person, it follows that the person of the Son of God could be born of a woman, not because the person is Divine, but because it subsists in the human nature, taken from the woman; and although God might have taken our flesh in another manner than by the conception of a woman, just as easily as he had formed the body of the first man from the dust of the earth, yet it was more appropriate and more expedient that He should be born of a woman, in order that we might be borne towards humility and love, seeing that the Father of all things has not disdained to have a mother, relatives, and a country upon earth, to submit to our infirmity, and to suffer all the pains of a poor and toilsome life.

And because Christ also came into the world to set us an

example of holiness, and to show us the way to blessedness, it was proper that He should live amongst men, and not lead a solitary life, in order that by His preaching and His life we might have access to God.

And further, because it is reasonable that He who lived amongst men should conform to their manner of living, it was necessary that apart from the austerity of His life Christ should eat, drink, and be clothed according to the usage of the people amongst whom He had chosen to be born and to dwell. *For it is not abstinence from eating and drinking which makes the perfection of life, but purity of soul, ardent charity, virtue in fortune, or reverse, humility in glory and opulence, and patience in misfortune and poverty.*

It was also equally appropriate that He should choose a life of poverty, for it is fitting that heralds of truth and virtue should be exempt from the cares of the world, and beyond all suspicion of cupidity.

Now that applies eminently to Christ, who besides revealing His divinity, chose that which was the most feeble and the most lowly, in order to confound the powerful and wise of His time, and that the transformation of the world might be attributed, not to the power and wisdom of man, but to the power and wisdom of God. And therefore it was suitable that He should accompany His holy life with miracles, to show that the Divinity dwelt in Him, according to the expression of the Apostle.

In conclusion, if we religiously consider in all gentleness and humility His words and His actions, we shall find in them an admirable order and an ineffable reason.

CHAPTER IX.

THE DOGMA OF ORIGINAL SIN HAS IN IT NOTHING IMPOSSIBLE OR CONTRARY TO REASON.

TO render more intelligible what we have said and what we shall still say, we shall speak of original sin, which vitiates the whole human race, as the Faith proclaims.

We have already shown that the world, with all it contains, did not exist from eternity, but that God created it at the time that pleased Him, and by His infallible will. At that time He created man as the principal part of the corporeal world, and because the intellective soul of man is immortal and noble, so an immortal body totally submitted to the soul appeared to be the most convenient to Him, in order that there might be a proportion between form and matter, and that the higher nature should have domination over the inferior nature; but because all knowledge of the intellectual soul depends upon the senses, and because the senses can be nowhere but in a body composed of four elements and of a corruptible flesh, it was therefore necessary to give to the soul a corruptible and rebellious body. But as Divine providence never makes anything that is necessary in a person defectively,

it is quite right what we confess and believe—that God, by a supernatural benefit, took out of the body of man all that could naturally be in antagonism with the soul.

Then, since the dissolution and revolt of the senses belong to human nature, it was appropriate that original justice, that is to say, the impassibility of the body and the subjection of the senses to the reason, and of the entire body to the soul, should be conferred upon all human nature by a super-celestial and gratuitous gift. It is then reasonable to say that this grace was given to our first father at the moment of his creation, in order that by him it should be transmitted to all his descendants.

But because man was created with a free will, and was to submit himself to Divine laws, it was just that if he refused to obey God he should be deprived of that original justice, and that as the senses no longer obeyed the reason the body reassumed its mortal position, and reduced itself to the primitive dust out of which it had been formed, and it was equally just that the culpable should be punished in that he had sinned. We, therefore, call original sin privation of original rectitude and of the supernatural gift; a sin transmitted by the first man to posterity, for all his descendants are deprived of original rectitude, which would have been their heritage if the first man had not lost it by his own fault. Is there anything in that repugnant to reason? Besides, certain signs of this hereditary cause appear in the human race, for since the Divine providence punishes evil and rewards good, every punishment presupposes a fault, and we see the human

race suffer corporeal afflictions—cold, heat, watching, hunger, thirst, duties, maladies, and at length death; also spiritual punishment, such as weakness of the reason and free will, revolt of the flesh, which is the cause why humanity falls daily into grave and numerous errors. And although defects of this kind appear to be the natural condition of humanity and consequences necessary to matter, yet, if we reflect upon the Providence and goodness of God, we shall persuade ourselves that God would have remedied these defects if man had not interposed an obstacle by some offence.

This is the reason why, after contemplating the Divine bounty and goodness of God, we recognise that these infirmities are come upon man as a punishment for the sin of our first father, who represented all humanity. We are then right in saying that the sin of the first man was at once personal and common: personal, because Adam deprived himself of his proper good; and common, because he deprived posterity of the benefit he should have transmitted as their heritage. This privation of original rectitude, as regards the will of the first man, is a sin for all humanity, seeing that by their participation in human nature all men are counted as one single man, of whom Adam was the head, of whom his descendants are the members, through which with his blood he transmitted his sin.

For in the same manner as the action of the hand which is moved by a bad will is culpable, so by the will of the first parent this sin is voluntary in his members that is in

his posterity; without that culpable will of the first father there would have been no original sin, and men could not have been born deprived of original justice, in the same manner as the operations of the hands, feet, and other members of the body, would not be culpable if the will which orders the evil had not preceded them.

If any one estimate it as unjust that all men should be punished for the fault of one, and should be condemned before birth, we reply that this punishment is nothing more than privation of original rectitude, and of the grace which was not due to man, but was given him by the Divine kindness; for although God cannot be held to anything towards His creatures, yet He has established laws, according to which, some things are due to them naturally, such as intelligence, memory, and other things, without which they could not exist, and would miss their natural perfection; but original rectitude did not proceed from any obligation of nature, but from the pure superabundant bounty of God. Now, every one who grants a grace is free to give it when and how it pleases him.

God gave original rectitude to the first man, with a promise to preserve it to him and his descendants, on condition that he did not lose it by sin, and so cause his posterity to lose it; for the first man enclosed in himself all human nature, so that it was not upon him alone, but upon all humanity that the divine precept was imposed. Therefore, no one has a right to complain of being deprived by the fault of the first father, for if original rectitude had not been given to Adam there would have

been no occasion to complain of God, for it was a gratuitous gift of divine mercy. Therefore, by the fault of Adam, men descended from him have not personally incurred punishment, but as they are born of a father deprived of original rectitude, upon conditions purely natural, they are said to be born in sin, which could not be said if that rectitude had not been given to man.

Then a man cannot complain if, when he is conceived, he does not receive that divine gift which is not due to him by the right of nature; in the same way that no one has a right to complain of not having been sanctified in the womb of his mother, or created at the beginning in blessedness. But, as it has been already said, that man is ordained to a supernatural end, to which he cannot attain, save by the gift of supernatural grace, we say, that he who dies, soiled only with original sin, is deprived of eternal life, because between him and eternal life there is no proportion, no relation of propriety; however, he will not feel any sensible pain, any affliction.

Therefore, the doctrine concerning original sin contains nothing impossible or contrary to reason.

CHAPTER X.

IT IS NOT WITHOUT REASON THAT WE BELIEVE THE PASSION AND OTHER MYSTERIES OF THE HUMANITY OF THE SON OF GOD, AND ALL THE DECREES OF THE CHURCH CONCERNING FAITH.

GOD, the Father of mercy, full of all goodness, from the beginning of the world, provided for the fall of man efficacious remedies; these remedies were—first, the sacrifices and faith of parents, then circumcision, and lastly baptism.

Now, each one of the saints of the Old Testament rendered sufficient satisfaction for his own person, but none of them could give satisfaction for the sin of human nature, which was vitiated in the first man, in whom all have sinned, but could only with difficulty each one satisfy for himself; and this sin, infused into every nature, was, in some sort, infinite. Then, since original sin had polluted all nature, an infinite remedy was wanted, and every creature being finite, no one could satisfy even for himself.

But, perhaps you will say, it is the mark of the goodness of God to receive from man the satisfaction he can render, and to remit to him, by mercy, what he cannot pay to divine justice. To this we reply, that, if God could have otherwise helped us, it is to be believed that his infinite kindness

would have accepted a personal satisfaction from each man; but in his infinite mercy he has found a means of fully satisfying his justice, which suffers no impurity, and at the same time of restoring to human nature its perfection.

Therefore, as on the one hand, man owed and could not satisfy; and as, on the other, God could, but owed nothing, He, in his mercy, clothed himself in our mortal flesh, in order that, being able, and owing at the same time, as God and man, he might give the necessary satisfaction. Thus, then, the man-God, the Son of God, Jesus Christ, has paid the whole debt, and, at the price of His blood, shed upon the cross, the gate of Heaven was open to all believers. From all that we have said, it evidently results that the divine Incarnation was required and was appropriate, for by Incarnation, God has more clearly manifested his power in uniting the divine nature to the human. He has not less shown his divine wisdom in finding an admirable means to recover lost man, and to conduct him to eternal life, opening thus to the world an inexhaustible source of blessings.

He has equally opened the rich treasures of his bounty since he has, so to speak, infused himself in all human nature, in order to unite it to himself by a closer bond. In fine, His mercy equalled His justice when he was voluntarily crucified, and made full satisfaction for us. Therefore, from this, poor repentant sinners may easily and surely hope for pardon; and those who will not repent, but obstinately follow after evil, may fear the rigour of imperishable justice. This is the reason why, since the coming

of Jesus Christ, an infinite number of men have deserted vice to embrace virtue, and have repented of their sins.

Therefore, if we consider, as is necessary, all these benefits and innumerable others, we shall find in them a wisdom so profound as to transcend all human intelligence; and still further, all that which in Christ appears to be folly, will be regarded as above human thought, and the reason of such a grand mystery will appear more and more admirable to those who seek in good faith the light of truth.

It was, therefore, fitting that Jesus Christ should suffer and die for the human race.

And because He came not only to efface our sins but to take upon him our life, not only was He willing to suffer, but He chose the most ignominious life in order to teach us, by His example, to brave and to suffer everything for love of truth and justice.

Those who contemplate the cross of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, will draw from that fountain of life, grace and joy ineffable.

And further, as Christ died for the remission of sins, and to open for us the gates of eternal life, so He was buried, and remained three days in the tomb. But if He had not risen again, men would have had no hope of a future resurrection.

It was then well that, after having accomplished His divine mission, He rose from the dead, full of glory; and because His body had become immortal and glorified, He could no longer dwell among men; and, as His body was the most perfect of all, by the beauty of His soul and His

union with the Divine Word, it was fitting that He should be elevated into the heavens, to sit at the right hand of the Father, as His only Son, in the most perfect felicity of eternal life.

We believe we have said sufficient in the preceding book to induce an entire and unwavering faith in the Holy Scriptures, because they come from God. And, therefore, as in material things, so also in doctrines, everything moveable must be referred to something immoveable, we say that the Providence of God has established in His Church this unchangeable doctrine, to which all may have recourse as to a firm and solid foundation.

CHAPTER XI.

THAT THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION WISELY LAYS DOWN TWO PRINCIPLES OF CHARITY AS THE FOUNDATION OF THE MORAL LIFE.

AFTER having shown that the Christian religion does not contain in its dogmas anything irrational or impossible, we shall prove that it contains nothing impossible in its morality, although what we have already said upon the Christian life might suffice; for if anything better cannot be given nor conceived, it follows that the Christian morality is the best, and this does not require proof, since causes are known by their effects. Still, for greater clearness, we will expose, in particular, certain principal laws which form the source and principle of other laws.

The first principle of Christian morality is this: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul, with all thy spirit, and with all thy strength;" and the second is, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

This precept orders us to love God and our neighbour not only with a natural love, but to love them by the supernatural gift of grace. It is necessary, therefore, that a man should dispose himself to receive from God, and to

exercise this supernatural gift of grace and charity, for to love God more than one's self, and to love our neighbour as one's self, is a natural sentiment, but this precept commands us to perfect and sanctify by the supernatural gift of grace that which comes from nature. It is then commanded that we should love God more than any other object, and more than ourselves, so that we may dispose ourselves and our actions for him who is our end; as the apostle says, "Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

Because the revolt of the flesh is the greatest obstacle to divine love, it has been said, "Thou shalt love the Lord with all thy heart," for in the heart is the source of life and the principle of the senses and desires, a principle which leads us to the love of things sensible, and withdraws us from the love of God.* This is why the precept says, "With all thy heart," as if it would say, "Submit thy senses to thy will, in order that they may tend towards God, and that they may be in accord with reason and the divine law; but, because the will goes astray if it have not reason for its guide, it is also said, "With all thy soul;" that is, with all thy will directed towards the end of all things, because the soul is the vital principle which produces motion and distinguishes living animated beings from those who are not; for animated beings move them-

*"In the whole offering, the head and heart of the beast were burnt upon the altar (Leviticus i. 3; viii. 20). Philo finds a reason in the fact (Opp. ii. 190) that the head and the heart are the seat of the ἡγεμονικον, that is, of the νους." Note to part iv. sec. 12. "The Heart and the Head." Delitzsch Biblical Psychology.

selves, which inanimate things cannot do. Therefore, since the will is the principle which moves the powers of the reasonable soul, the expression, "All the soul," means all the will, with its modes and acts; wherefore, we ought to love and desire God, to place in Him all our joys, to fear to offend Him, to hope in His mercy, not to presume too much on our own justice, and to do everything to His glory. But, because the movement of the will depends upon the reason, seeing that the object of the will is well known, it is ordered also, "With all thy spirit," for the spirit signifies the intelligence or reason which ought to tend towards God in such a manner that all that it comprehends and contemplates should be God, or what relates to God actually or habitually. But whatever things we love, we love them in proportion to the relation they have with the end; but the end is loved for itself, and therefore without measure, so that it is with reason that the precept of divine love adds, "And with all thy strength," in order that God being our end we may tend towards Him with all the powers of the soul and body, and that our intelligence, our will, and our senses may obey Him, and be adorned with grace and virtues, and thus God may be glorified, for the glory of the cause is in the perfection of its effect.

This precept teaches us how man ought to love God, and how he ought to love himself.

But, because man did not yet know how he should love his neighbour, the love of whom is less natural than self-love, God added to the precept, "Thou shalt love thy

neighbour as thyself," that is, to the same end as ourself. Now we ought to love ourselves to this end, that God may be glorified in the perfection of His work, then we ought to love our neighbour to this end, that the divine work might appear and be praised in him.

What more just, more reasonable, more divine, than those three precepts of love in which are contained the rights of God, the duty of man, and the perfection of all the laws, that is, the Law and the Prophets?

All that results from these principles, all that accords with this triple precept, is reputed holy and inviolable amongst men; and all that is contrary to the divine teaching should be avoided as an impiety.

CHAPTER XII.

THAT THE MORALITY OF THE CHURCH IS THE MOST EXCELLENT.

IT is with reason that these two tables of moral precepts are proposed to us, the one which regulates the duties of man towards God, the other towards his neighbour.

Now, man is a sociable animal, a member of a community: it is of importance to the rectitude of his life that at first he conduct himself well towards his Prince, then towards his fellow citizens; and every man who is a member of the human society should conduct himself properly in regard to God who reigns over human nature; and, as a Christian, he should conduct himself properly as regards the chief of the Christian Religion—Jesus Christ, God and man.

Now, man conducts himself well when he loves God with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his spirit, and with all his strength. But, because all owe to the Universal Sovereign an inviolable fidelity, it is with reason that the first commandment enjoins us to adore the true God who is one, and not to bear our homage to strange gods. Because respect is due to the Supreme Sovereign, the second precept is, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain," for God must be honoured in all things which represent him; and of this kind are the words which are invented to design or to praise him.

In fine, because worship is due to the Sovereign Lord, it is with reason that the third precept of the first table says, "Remember to keep holy the Sabbath Day."

This precept requires us to render to God an interior and exterior worship. These three precepts express all the duties of man towards God, and we repudiate everything that is contrary to the Divine commandments.

The second table contains the law of love towards the neighbour, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Now, to love is to wish well, and never to wish evil to the person we love. The precept of love towards the neighbour is therefore divided into two parts, since it commands us to do good to him and not to do evil. This is why the first commandment of the second table is, "Honour thy Father and thy Mother" (under these words we must also include our benefactors).

But the offence may be made in three ways—by deed, mouth, and heart.

In order that we may live innocent of all offence towards our neighbour, we must abstain from injuring his own person and that of her who is united to him, and from injury to his property. This is the reason why in the same table are contained the following precepts. "Thou shalt not kill," the precept which forbids us to injure the person of our neighbour. "Thou shalt not commit adultery," which forbids us to do violence to the wife of our neighbour, or in any other manner to sully our soul. "Thou shalt not steal," forbidding us to usurp the property of others. "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour," con-

demning all iniquitous lying or perjuring language. "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife," a precept which represses the infection of mental lasciviousness and all impurity of heart. "Thou shalt not covet anything that belongs to thy neighbour," which commands us not merely to abstain from usurping the property of another, but to keep our heart pure from the desire of an unjust possession.

But since some one will say, perhaps, if the desires contrary to other commandments are not less criminal than the desires of the flesh and stealing, why are these latter mentioned in preference to the others? To this we reply, that the evangelical law not only condemns bad actions, but also every disordered affection: now the precepts announced above are to be understood not merely of external acts but of internal, consequently, it is not without reason that express mention is made of the desires of the flesh and of stealing, because the malice of desires opposed to the other precepts is evident to any one. Who, in fact, is ignorant that not to believe in God, or to be an infidel, or rebellious, is not sin? Who does not regard as criminal him who despises or outrages his parents? The thought of homicide, of falsehood, or of calumny, inspires more horror than delectation, but the desire of the flesh may appear to be natural, and has a dangerous allurement. The desire of another's property appears equally natural to man on account of the necessities of life, and consequently many would believe that these desires are less culpable, inasmuch as the mere desire could injure no one.

Therefore, these two commandments against the desires of the flesh and the property of others have been expressly formulated.

Thus, the Christian law, which wills the perfection of man and which foresees everything, exacts uprightness and purity of heart as well as uprightness and purity of work; because, as we have said, all the other commandments spring from those principles, form the canon of justice and injustice, and are the foundation of the moral life. The Christian religion, then, has determined with more perfection than all that the philosophers have written, on virtues and manners, and it has perfectly and clearly taught many divine and natural things which philosophy has neglected or failed to comprehend.*

The Christian religion has added counsels to precepts in order that the precepts might be the better observed. As the whole life of the Christian tends towards Divine love, which can exist only in purity of heart and detachment from earthly things, the precepts are divided into two portions, the one affirmative and the other negative.

All the affirmative precepts tend toward the perfection of charity, and the negative precepts to purity, because they forbid everything that may sully the soul; with both are connected counsels, for it is counsel not precept which wills

*"Epicurus summum bonum in voluptate animi esse censet. Aristippus in voluptate corporis. Calliphon et Dinomachus, Cyrænaici honestatem cum voluptate junxerunt. Diodorus in privatione doloris summum bonum posuit. Hieronymus in non dolendo. Peripatetici autem in bonis animi et corporis, et fortunæ. Herilli summum bonum est scientia. Zenonis cum natura congruenter vivere. Quorundam stoicorum virtutem sequi. Aristoteles in honestate ac virtute summum bonum collocavit. In tanta diversitate quem sequimur cui credimus?"—"Lactantius De Falsa Sapientia," Lib. iii. c. 7.

perfection. Religion, then, counsels the Christian to sell his goods and give to the poor, to follow Christ who was poor, to withdraw his heart from every ambition, every desire of glory, every sentiment of pride. In order that he may acquire perfect charity, religion counsels him still to consecrate himself to Divine worship, to celebrate Divine praise, to pray frequently, and to do many other things to which those only are invited who wish to attain to perfection and love.

By all these reasons it is manifest that the Christian religion proceeds with so much order and wisdom in its morality that it omits nothing good and admits nothing evil: by the efficacy of its teaching it renders the most violent men gentle as lambs; it purifies and adorns with virtues men who are sullied with the greatest vices. It is therefore clear as the day that no philosophy, no religion, has introduced into humanity such a teaching, nor has produced such fair fruit: nay, more, it is evident that it surpasses every other system by the distance between the zenith of heaven and the centre of the earth, by the difference which exists between light and darkness.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE JUDICIAL LAW OF THE CHURCH IS INFINITELY WISE.

IT will be just as easy to show that our holy religion is equally reasonable in judicial matters; for since in all things there is a principal law which serves as a rule and measure of others, we place in the matter of laws one principal law which we call eternal, because it is the reason of all our actions. This is the law from which all others are derived; for in every regulated movement the force of the second motive is drawn from the first; so in governments, the reason of the first descends to the second. Now the law as rule and measure exists under two modes, namely, in the being who directs and measures, and in him who is directed and measured; but all creatures, inasmuch as they are subjected to Divine providence, are measured and directed; therefore all creatures partake in some way of the eternal law by which each one naturally inclines towards his end. Nevertheless, reasonable creatures being more excellent, subjected to Divine providence, have also more right and participation in that law of Providence. Now participation in that law by the reasonable creature is called the natural law, which is nothing else than the mass of natural precepts graven in us virtually or by habit. The

source of these precepts is the light of natural reason, Divinely infused, by virtue of which certain principles manifest themselves to us both in things speculative and practical. These principles are called first, or natural laws, and from them are deduced other laws, first, as conclusions, secondly, decrees of wisdom generally accepted. The first method is similar to that by which conclusions are drawn from principles in scientific investigations. The second mode resembles that by which general forms of beauty in art are specially applied, as, for instance, when a clever architect applies the general form in architectural beauty to a house. Therefore we say certain laws descend from the general principles of the natural law by way of conclusion, as from this precept, "Thou shalt not kill," we must conclude that we must never give poison to anyone. Others are deduced by way of determination: thus, the natural law ordains that he who commits an offence shall be punished, but it does not determine the mode of punishment, which is left to the discretion and determination of prudent, wise men, capable of discerning what is useful to the general interest. Laws of this kind we call human, positive, or adventitious; for laws vary according to the diversity of times and places, and follow the common interest, for all men cannot be governed by the same positive laws. However, the natural law is invariable and identical amongst all people. Particular laws, which are deduced by way of conclusion, are equally unchangeable; for the conclusion drawn from true principles is necessarily true.

But, because the natural law is not sufficient to direct human life, we have need of the help of another, which is the Divine law. The necessity of this may be confirmed by many reasons, although we might conclude it from what has already been said.

First—Man is directed by law in his personal actions towards his end. Now this end is supernatural, as it has been proved above, therefore, besides the natural law, which cannot transgress its limits, there is need of one superior, such as the Divine law, to direct man to his supernatural end.

Secondly—So great is the weakness of our intelligence, that when we descend to particulars we meet numerous difficulties. Hence result judgments differing from one another, and laws contradicting each other. This is why men advance only by feeling their way, as though they were blind, not knowing what road to take in life. It was, therefore, necessary that the law of God should be given to guide us surely in the way of salvation.

Thirdly—The human law can neither punish nor prevent all faults; it tolerates many unworthy things to avoid greater evils. It is necessary, therefore, that the Divine law should assure us that he who escapes the human law will not escape Divine justice.

Fourthly—Human law cannot judge interior and occult matters, seeing that its judgment is uncertain as regards hidden things. A Divine law was, then, necessary to penetrate into interior and secret faults, that men might advance more perfectly to their end.

We say, therefore, that this law is the embodiment of precepts proceeding from the supernatural and gratuitous light of faith. Nay, more, we affirm that all the precepts of the Divine law—precepts of which we have already spoken in the chapter on morality—descend from the grace of the Holy Spirit.

From these precepts we deduce other particular laws, by way of conclusion or determination—as we remarked when treating of the natural law—and these particular laws we call canonical, in the same way as we designate those laws which are deduced from the natural law, civil.

By the canon law the causes of priests and clerks, and by the natural or civil law those of seculars, are judged. Still, it is not to be imagined that the Divine and natural laws are in any way contrary; but, as grace renders nature perfect, so the Divine law perfects the law of nature, whence we say, that all that belongs to natural right belongs equally to Divine, for precepts, inasmuch as they proceed from natural light, are called natural, being perfected by grace and supernatural light, pass over to the Divine right. But all that pertains to the Divine law pertains also to the natural, seeing that religion commands many things which do not issue from human reason, such as matters of faith, of which we have already spoken, and the sacraments, of which we shall presently speak.

The Christian religion is governed by Divine laws, neither despising anything conformable, nor admitting anything contrary to them. Therefore, it does not reject the wise and reasonable laws of the philosophers, and even of the

pagan emperors; on the contrary, convinced that every good thing comes from God, it gathers to itself what is good and true in all books and doctrines.

But it exercises so much diligence and solicitude to reject errors, fables, vanities, and falsehoods, that it accepts with difficulty, and very rarely, *the books published in honour of the saints, especially when the name of the author is not well known;* in addition, it corrects all words wherever they occur, and if by hazard any particular opinion be met with contrary to truth, it must not be attributed to the Christian religion, but to the perversity and tyranny of men who are the enemies of God, who rebel against the Church, and in vain thunder against it their censures and anathemas.

We believe that we have sufficiently proved the judicial teaching of the Church to be full of reason and wisdom.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SACRAMENTS OF THE CHURCH HAVE BEEN WISELY INSTITUTED BY OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

IT is now necessary that we treat of the ceremonies of the Church. Amongst these the sacraments hold the first place, or, rather, we may say that all ceremonies relate to sacraments. This is why we shall first show that the Divine sacraments are wisely instituted in the Church, whence it will be easy to comprehend the reason of the ceremonies.

Jesus Christ, by His incarnation, His passion, and His death, being the universal cause of our salvation, and as we have shown above that the universal cause of natural things produces no effect without the co-operation of particular causes, it becomes rational and proper that there should be some particular causes of our salvation to unite the virtue of the universal cause with us. But, in the same manner as secondary causes are the instruments of the first cause, and that particular causes serve the cause universal, so the sacraments are the instruments, the means which Jesus Christ uses to operate our salvation. And because there must be some proportion between the instruments and the universal cause, it was fitting that the sacraments should be

transmitted to us under words and sensible signs, since the universal cause of our salvation is the Incarnate Word. Therefore, it was necessary that the Word, united to the visible element, should produce the sacrament as a particular cause and instrument of the Incarnate Word, and this is most suitable for man, since he only comprehends invisible things by things visible.

But, because *no one can save himself without grace*, as we have already said, it is fitting that these sacraments, as the instrumental cause, should confer grace, *although their virtue does not extend to the ultimate effect of grace*, in the same manner as the sun and man combined engender man without producing the intellectual soul, seeing that the soul is the immediate creation of God, and not an effect of the power of matter;* for the instrument has a double virtue—the one comes from its form, just as the saw cuts because it is iron and indented; the other comes from the power and movement of the principal agent, just as the saw moved by the workman makes a bench or a table.

However, the virtue of the principal agent does not always attain to the final effect: thus, the sun and man, who are the instruments of the first cause, do not produce the essence of the intellective soul, but only attain to the final deposition of matter and to the union of the soul with the body. So we say, *that grace being a supernatural gift, which*

* See Delitzsch, Bib. Psych. sec. vii., "Traducianism and Creationism." The chapter concludes with a sentence which agrees with what Savonarola has just laid down. "Aristotle says, 'man begets man with the co-operation of the sun,' we say, with the co-operation of the Father of Spirits."—Clark's translation, by Dr. Wallis, "Theol. Lib." p. 142.

cannot come from the creature, nor the virtue of the sensible element, these sacraments do not attain to the essence of grace, but only to a disposition thereto.

The proof of the efficacy of these sacraments is in the purity of the life of those who receive them with devotion, in their conversion from vice to virtue, in their constant progress in the spiritual life—a progress the more rapid and the greater as they themselves are more humble and pure in the use of the sacraments.

But as we have already spoken of the happy effects of these sacraments in the preceding book, we shall say no more upon them in this place.

CHAPTER XV.

SOLUTION OF OBJECTIONS AGAINST THE SACRAMENT OF THE EUCHARIST.

SINCE numerous and grave difficulties are made concerning the Sacrament of the Eucharist, we shall here treat of this sacrament in a particular manner. We are thought, in fact, to believe on this point impossibilities. Let us see what we believe: we believe and confess that under the appearance of bread, however small it may be, the body of Christ is contained wholly and entire, and that under the species of wine, however small, the blood of Christ is present, wholly and entire; we believe, also, that at the same time Christ is in Heaven, wholly and entire; whence it follows that by the consecration Christ can be in the Sacrament of the Eucharist only in two modes.

First: by the conversion of the bread into the body of Christ, and of the wine into His blood, which appears to the unbelieving to be an impossibility, "because," say they, "nothing can be changed into a thing already existing, for a thing into which another thing is changed could only commence its existence at the moment of the change. Consequently, if the bread be changed into the body of Christ, Christ could only exist from the moment of the

operated change, and not before, and that it would not be the body of Christ which is in heaven, but another body newly produced.

Second.—The second manner in which Jesus Christ can be in the Eucharist is locally; now this manner, say they, "is none the less impossible than the preceding, for either the Christ would be at one time in two different places, in heaven and in the sacrament, or He would quit heaven to appear in the sacrament. Further, a local movement cannot have many terms. But in the Church many hosts are consecrated under which Christ must be present, though a body cannot exist at one time in many places." "Besides," say they, "how can the body of Christ be enclosed in so small a place? How can the whole body of Christ be in a small host, and the whole of His blood in a little wine? How is it that (as the Church believes) accidents can remain without the substance proper to them? These accidents, if they were deprived of their substances, could they undergo changes which can only happen to them in their substance? Could they be hot or cold? could they be capable of nourishment? could they become intoxicated? could the bread be burned, corrupted, be eaten by animals. In fine, if the sacrament be so often divided into so many little parcels, how can Christ be present under each of them?"

We reply to these objections, first, that the ineffable power of God infinitely surpasses our feeble conceptions, and that things utterly impossible to our strength and to nature alone are easy to God. But further, we reply that in

the Eucharist there is nothing impossible, that is to say, that implies contradiction. Now, whatever does not imply contradiction is possible to God. We say then that the body and blood of Christ are present in the Eucharist by virtue of the consecration, not by a local movement, but by conversion. But this conversion of the bread into the body of Christ, and the wine into His blood, is very different from all those changes which take place in nature. In natural changes the subject always remains, the forms only change and succeed each other, whether they be substantial or accidental. But in the conversion of the Eucharist the subject passes into another substance, and the accidents remain, which is impossible to the force of nature alone, for every operation in nature pre-supposes a matter and a subject, whilst the infinite power of God to operate the change of one subject into another has no need of pre-existing matter since it can create it. In the same manner, then, as by the operation of nature, which pre-supposes matter, a form can cease and give place to another form on another matter; so, by the Divine virtue, which has no need of matter, the bread can be changed into the body of Christ, and become His flesh.

If, then, Christ is present in the Eucharist by the effect of a change, of a conversion, and not by the effect of a local movement, He is not there present *as in a place. He is only present as in a place, in Heaven.* In the Eucharist He is present sacramentally, and in a manner indivisible: whence it follows, that He is wholly entire under each parcel separated from others: for He is not in the sacrament, according

to the laws of extent, but in a manner more admirable, and possible only to God. In virtue even of the words by which the transubstantiation is operated there are in the Eucharist the body and blood of Christ under the species of bread and wine, because that is the meaning of the term Transubstantiation. But by the law of natural concomitance there are also with body and blood the soul, the Divinity of Christ, the quantity of His body and His blood, and other things of that kind, which are neither the body nor the blood. This is why the quantity of the body of Christ being in the sacrament only by concomitance, it is not the quantity of the body of Christ that must be compared with that (the quantity) of the place where the sacrament is, but it is the quantity of the visible species that must only be compared with that place. It therefore follows that Christ is not present by Himself as in a place, as in heaven, where His own dimensions are the measure of the space He occupies; and it also follows, that in the sacrament He is present locally, only by accident, and that then the dimensions of the species alone measure the space in which they are enclosed. Whence we may see that the objection drawn from the multiplication falls of its own accord, *since Christ is not upon the altar by Himself as is in a place*, but that He is there as in a place only according to the dimension of the species of bread and wine, which can be multiplied, and in this manner, without absurdity, Christ can be in many places at one time.

It is not more impossible that the accidents by the Divine Omnipotence may subsist without their subject, for God

being able to produce effects without the aid of secondary causes since He can create out of nothing, therefore He can also preserve the accidents without the substance which should bear them. And we may say as much of dimensions, which many philosophers have regarded as subsisting by themselves, from the reason that we can conceive of them in a separated state. But, without doubt, God is more powerful in action than we in intelligence. The dimensive quantity has this in particular amongst other accidents, that it is in itself individual. It is impossible to figure to ourself many whitenesses for example, unless we represent them upon subjects that bear them; whilst, on the contrary, we may conceive of many lines on the same subject, even if we consider these lines in themselves; for the diverse position of lines suffices to multiply them, and this is why we say that in the Eucharist there is, by the Divine Omnipotence, only the dimensive quantity which subsists, and that the other accidents repose on that quantity as upon a subject.

Wherefore since, as we have said, the body and blood of Christ by virtue of the Transubstantiation are in the sacrament, and as their dimensions are only there by concomitance, there is nothing absurd in saying that the whole body of Christ is under each particle of the sacrament. When in fact a substance is in the whole, it is also entirely in each part of the whole, the soul, for instance, is entirely in the whole body and entirely in each part of the body; so that the fraction or division does not affect the body and blood of Christ, but only the dimensions of the species of the bread and wine.

These are the principal difficulties brought against the Eucharist. It results from their solution that it would be still more easy to reply to other difficulties that might be brought not less grave, but the Christian doctors have resolved them. The Faith, therefore, affirms nothing impossible concerning the Eucharist.*

* One of the charges brought against Savonarola, when he was excommunicated by Alexander VI., was, that he taught heresy concerning the Eucharist.

BOOK IV.

PREAMBLE.

IF all men, setting aside for a moment temporal cares, would become eager for a knowledge of the truth, it would not be so difficult to open their eyes, and to convert their souls to it, for everything naturally inclines towards its perfection, and the perfection of the intelligence is truth. Whence it occasionally happens that men, even against their will, and by the sole inspiration of nature, see and confess the truth.

Now, because a contrary leads to the knowledge of its opposite (for rectitude is its own rule, and the rule of its contrary), every man who knows a truth, knows at the same time the error opposed to that truth, and solves the sophisms which contradict it; but of two contraries in opposition the stronger bears down the weaker, and, as truth has the greater force, to attach oneself to it, is to have the power of refuting error. Universally, wherever there are discussion and diverse opinions, the truth will be found on the side of the most

solid reasons, the most numerous and most proper to reply to objections, and on the side of arguments which have prevailed a long time against the most redoubtable adversaries, and with those who confound all objections by the most efficacious proofs.

Now, the Christian religion being founded upon such solid proofs, and no other religion being able to prevail against it, and as it has remained up to the present time invincible in spite of its numerous and powerful adversaries, easily refuting their objections, it must be true, the only true religion. But we shall also show that other religions are infinitely inferior to it, not only upon comparison but when considered by themselves; that they are incomplete; that they include numerous and grave errors; that they derive their origin from the most deplorable superstition, and that consequently they must be rejected. This is what we shall now show, first in general, and then in particular.

CHAPTER I.

NO RELIGION OTHER THAN THE CHRISTIAN IS TRUE.

THIS is proved, in the first place, by everything we have hitherto said. In fact, if the Christian religion is true no other religion can be admissible, for it universally teaches that there is no possible salvation out of its pale. All other religions, or rather superstitions, deceive themselves completely by fancying they can conduct men to blessedness.

Besides, the end of religion being the perfection and happiness of life, and no life being better than the Christian, therefore no religion can surpass it in this point. If there existed one of this kind it would be either inferior or equal to Christianity: if inferior, it could not be good, and we must attach ourselves to the better, that is, to the Christian, because the Christian religion, which repels all others, evidently repels that which is inferior. If, on the contrary, it be equal, it would in no way differ from it, and this having the same end, and the same means, it would be one and the same as the Christian religion. If it had any other end, and other means, it would then be inferior to it, for we have proved that the end and means of the Christian religion are supremely excellent; in that case then this must be rejected.

Besides, we know causes from their effects; now the effect

of Divine worship is holiness of life, which is nowhere so excellent or so complete as in Christianity, therefore the worship which it inculcates is the only true worship, and all others are vain superstitions.

This is confirmed still further by the following proof: the Christian religion by means of its exterior worship, and the doctrine it preaches, leads to perfection and holiness in so short a time, and so completely, that there is nothing more admirable, nor more capable of touching and converting men than these means. Therefore, he never errs who observes the Christian faith and manners. That Faith tells us all other beliefs are superstitious and execrable, and therefore we should regard them as erroneous fictions. But we have said sufficient upon this subject: let us now advance to the consideration of each form of worship in particular.

Now, as it would be long and useless to discuss every system, we shall reduce all beliefs which are outside Christianity to six principles: namely, those of philosophers, astrologers, idolaters, Jews, heretics, and Mahomedans. Although these beliefs differ from each other, and every one of them is the source of many divisions, yet, as there are points upon which they accord, we can combat and refute the philosophers altogether, then the astrologers, and successively the idolaters, the Jews, the heretics and the Mahomedans, and show how they have erred, and have wandered from the high road of truth.

Let us begin with the philosophers, who have followed the light of natural reason.

CHAPTER II.

THAT THE RELIGIONS INVENTED BY PHILOSOPHERS ARE INCOMPLETE, AND FULL OF ERRORS.

FIRST, then, in our controversy with the philosophers, let us prove that in their works where they have not absolutely fallen into error, yet they have been incomplete and utterly useless as regards those questions of a supernatural order which pertain to salvation.

Conducted by the sole light of reason, they have been unable to extend their views beyond the bounds of the horizon of natural knowledge. Now, because it belongs to a wise man to regulate everthing in good order, and that the end is the rule of things which are placed in order, it is necessary that the wise man, to live holily and happily, should ascertain first of all what is the end of human life.

But we have already shown that this end consists in *seeing God*, a vision inappreciable to the mere natural reason of man alone.* Consequently, it is clear that as regards the knowledge of this end, upon which depends all that pertains

* "Hoc probat ejus Passio
Hoc sanguinis effusio
Per quam nobis redemptio
Datur et *Dei visio.*"
St. Bernardi: "De Nomine Jesu," v. 43.

to true religion, the philosophers have, so to speak, been in a strait, and have co-ordinated nothing with certainty, satisfaction, or justice.

Ignorant of the end, they have mistaken the means, for as we have already proved that the true worship of God consists in holiness of life, and that the efficacy of exterior worship depends upon holiness of life, this is the main reason why all that the philosophers have said about religion has been necessarily either imperfect, uncertain, or altogether erroneous. Who then would leave the Christian religion for the religion of philosophy?

In fact, though the most excellent philosophers have placed the end of human life in the contemplation of the Divine life, yet, having only reason for their guide, they have not been able to go beyond the mere idea. For an idea so confused, so indistinct, and so general, cannot satisfy man, in whom a desire to know and be happy is a longing of his nature. The philosophers, too, were tormented, which the necessity of knowing on this point what they did not know, and their torment was so much the greater from the consciousness they had of the inability and uncertainty of their doctrines. When interrogated, if they wished to speak of the vision of God in this life, or in the future, they could not give a clear, solid answer.

When they considered on the one hand the dangers and miseries of this life, it appeared to them against all reason and utterly impossible to place happiness here below. On the other hand, when they felt themselves logically forced to place it in a future life, a knowledge which is not

the result of experience, one could not deny their response with the same facility as they could give it, and then they would fall back upon a question not less difficult to them, that of the immortality of the soul. It would be necessary to them, in fact, first to prove the immortality of the soul, a question upon which they had a multitude of diverse opinions, which is a proof that they would find it difficult to solve. In fact, reason on the one hand, affirming that the intelligence is independent of the bodily organism in its being and operations, they were compelled to confess that the intelligent soul existed by itself, for everything operates according to what it is. But, on the other hand, it is difficult to understand how an immaterial substance can be the form of a body. Thus, Plato said that the soul was not the form of the body, but the moving principle. Aristotle, on the contrary, said that it is united to it as its form, which did not prevent him from speaking so obscurely upon the soul, itself considered as independent of the body, that Averroes, his commentator, fell into a strange error about the unity of intelligence amongst all men. In my opinion, Aristotle, that profound and sagacious genius, appreciating the insufficiency of natural light for the perfect understanding of the nature of the soul, and being unwilling to be embarrassed by indissoluble difficulties, has prudently treated this subject vaguely and obscurely. In fact, the philosophers were closed in on every side. If they affirmed that the soul is the form of the body, its mortality would be objected. If they said that it is immortal, they fell into the error of Plato, who made the soul the moving principle, and not the form

of the body, an error victoriously refuted by Aristotle. This error did not permit them to understand how a man can be a man by the soul itself. In fine, if they had confessed at once that the soul is the form of the body, and that it subsists independently of it as religion teaches, they would have given place to greater difficulties on account of the insufficiency of the light of nature to prove these things.

If any one had asked them whence comes such a form, for it is not drawn from the power of matter, since it is elevated above matter, they would not have dared to say that it came from nothing, for if they did, that aspersion would fall if it were not proved. Hence it came, that certain philosophers, to avoid this difficulty, conceived the idea of an eternal pre-existence of souls, but by that they lost themselves in a labyrinth still more inextricable, not having at their disposition the means of sustaining that by the soul man is man, nor that the soul is the form of the body, as we have shown in the first book of this work. They then fell into difficulties more numerous than those the Peripatetics object against the Platonists.

Aristotle expressed with reserve this opinion that the soul is distinct from the body, and that it is sent to it from without. In fine, this assertion is not sufficient to give us a complete understanding of the difficulty, nor to remove our perplexity: for if the soul comes from without and not from the power of matter, whence and how does it come? Aristotle makes no reply.

Besides, if he established that the intellectual soul is immortal, and that it is the form of the body, it is neces-

sary that he should also establish in conformity to his doctrine that the soul of Socrates, that of Plato, and every other man, did not exist before the moment when they were engendered; for, said Aristotle, the active principle of a being requires in that being the passive principle preliminarily disposed. That is, that a certain form is so proportioned to its matter that it can only suit *it*.

But if the Peripatetics had sustained such a doctrine, I do not see how they could have rejected the dogma of creation, which however they did not admit.

Another question, still very difficult, is to ascertain if the world is eternal, if it always existed, and if generation of beings will always continue?

If the philosophers say that the motions of the heavens must one day cease, they cannot give one evidence in proof which may not be easily refuted. If they say that the world has not had a beginning, and will have no end, which is the opinion of Aristotle, they will be compelled to admit a succession of recurring days and years.

Still more, man being the chief work in the universe, the world could never have existed without man: it will be necessary then that they should admit an infinite succession of men in the past and future; and the intelligent soul, being immortal, and, as we have said, being a certain particular and determined form, not being able to migrate from one body to another, they will be obliged to admit also the existence of an infinite number of souls in the world which will also continue for ever—an absurdity.

Besides, let us grant all that, new difficulties arise, for the

soul being the form of the body, it suffers violence out of the body, and never separates from it but with violence. Everything also, and consequently man, repudiates the corruption which takes place by the separation of soul and body. Now, as that which is violent cannot be perpetual, it is necessary to seek if all souls return to their bodies. If we affirm it, we must confess to the resurrection of an infinite number of bodies; if we deny it, we must admit that an infinite number of souls remain for ever in a state of violent separation from their bodies. In the first place we create an impossibility, for it is impossible that an infinite number of bodies could be contained in a certain place, and, in the second case, we establish something contrary to the laws of nature: the soul created for the body cannot remain in a state of violent separation. The solution which follows is not more happy. They say the same bodies will reappear after myriads of years in their primitive form, and the souls which formerly animated them will reunite with them.

Plato, for example, will reappear with his disciples to recommence everything he has done. But we may deny without proof what has been asserted without proof. Besides, what proof could we give? It is difficult to conceive of any, so great and so many are the difficulties. If the world is eternal, the heavens must in their revolutions return to the same point an infinite number of times. Consequently, Plato and his disciples have already appeared on the earth an infinite number of times, as well as all other men, which is so utterly absurd and without reason that we need not dwell upon it.

These are the difficulties which embarrass all those who endeavour to determine the end of human life by the sole light of natural reason.

It results from our investigation that the philosophers could establish nothing solid and certain in matters of religion, since, in the capital questions we have just examined, they were compelled to remain in doubt and darkness. If, then, they have ever succeeded, or should ever succeed, in forming a religion, it must necessarily be imperfect, uncertain, and full of errors.

This would appear more clearly if we could here examine all the opinions and errors of the philosophers. We should then see the infirmity of human reason, and its insufficiency in matters pertaining to salvation. The virtue of a thing is manifested in the supreme effort of its power. For example, the strength of Calonne, who could raise a hundred pounds, is not measured by a weight of fifty pounds, but by the extreme weight he could lift. Now, everything that could be done by human reason has been measured by the most excellent of the philosophers. The best proof of the fact is, after them the moderns have discovered no new thing in the purely natural order of the reason. But the ancients, as we have said, erred on many points, and upon all subjects have been incomplete, therefore, the light of reason alone is not sufficient for salvation.

First of all, no one can be ignorant that the ancient philosophers have been greatly deceived in establishing the end of man in riches, glory, honour, pleasures, and other things of that sort.

As to more recent philosophers, those amongst them who have been the most illustrious, and have not fallen into such errors, have, however, not the less erred in many matters, and their teaching about happiness is none the less confused and enveloped in errors. Consequently, we cannot regulate our deeds by the information they have left us relative to the ultimate end, since it would be necessary for that purpose that the end should be certain, as it is always necessary in matters of speculation that the first principle be certain.

Upon the question of the intelligent soul there are as many opinions and errors as there are philosophers. And, not to speak of the sophistical assertions of the ancients, which Aristotle has touched upon in his first book "De Anima," his own disciples even could not agree amongst themselves, but have given expression to false and discordant opinions. Some would have it that the intelligence, like a faculty, was a particular substance : the imagination, according to others, was a certain virtue accompanying a mixture of elements : others, again, pretend that the active intelligence is a separated substance : but to this their opponents reply that this substance is a portion of the Divine substance : and others, still, that it results from the innate power of matter. And, up to our own time, the philosophical sects have so differed amongst themselves that they have been also misunderstood by their disciples, simply because they have not had the assistance of the light of Faith. And if the Faith of Christ and his Light had not illuminated the world, plunged as it was in darkness, the philosophers

would have sunk deeper into difficulties and greater errors.

For on the question as to the origin of the world, the end for which it was created, and upon this to ascertain if it had a commencement, and will have an end, some have said one thing and some another. However, up to this day, no philosopher has found, nor will he ever find, any solid reasons to prove either the eternity of the world, the creation, or the future end. In fact, the arguments of Aristotle on this point are sufficiently feeble.

Therefore, as we have said, the philosophers have been unable to find the true end of the heavenly motion, and their ambiguity and ignorance as to angels and separate substances are no less. In fact, Aristotle, following in his calculations the motions of the heavens, equals the number of separate substances to the number of celestial spheres, as if those substances only existed by reason of the celestial movement, which is absurd. It is probable, however, that Aristotle speaking in this way has not intended to assert anything positively, but to expose, as much as he could, his manner of viewing subjects above his intelligence.

As regards worship, especially as regards external worship, the philosophers (not to speak of formal errors of many of them) have said nothing true, nothing certain.

Being ignorant of the true end, they have also remained ignorant of the Divine worship and honour, the offering of which alone can conduct a man to his Creator, whence it happens that they have expressed so many dissentient and light opinions upon the Providence of God. Their works,

then, have been of little use as to salvation, rather an immense confusion has resulted from their discord. It follows, therefore, from all this, that the doctrines and the religion of philosophers, if they indeed have had a religion, have not served to the true happiness of mankind. As to what little they have said good in this matter, far from despising it, we reclaim it as our right, as our legitimate property from the hands of unjust possessors; and these truths, though incomplete and insufficient, are useful principally to refute the adversaries of the Faith.

CHAPTER III.

THE TRADITIONS OF THE ASTROLOGERS ARE VAIN AND SUPERSTITIOUS.

AS the astrologers wish to be reckoned amongst the philosophers, for the reason, they say, that the heavens and the stars govern human actions, and that the heaven is in some sort God Himself, as certain of the ancients have thought, and have therefore adored the sun, the planets, and a multitude of stars, we shall here show by the aid of the strongest reasons, that astrology is a very great error, and that the celestial bodies have no influence upon the deeds of the intellectual or moral order.

The first proof is, that according to the very order of nature inferior things are conducted and ruled by things superior. Now, according to that natural order, the intelligence surpasses all bodies being separated from matter. Therefore, by themselves, the stars cannot be the cause of intellectual and moral acts.

In the second place, philosophy proves that bodies only act by movement. Therefore, celestial bodies cannot have influence upon things which are altogether external to them by their nature, by laws of movement, as are intellectual acts and those of the moral order. Besides, do we not know

that the soul becomes wise and prudent only by quietude and a certain separation from the body?

Thirdly: if bodies only act by movement, it is necessary that that which receives an impression on the part of another body should move. And everything that moves is body, as the philosopher (Aristotle) proves. Therefore, since the intelligence is not a body, nor a virtue attached to a corporeal organ, it is impossible that the celestial bodies produce action in the intelligence.

Fourthly: the movements of celestial bodies are submitted to the law of time, which serves to mark the first movement, consequently, that which has no relation to time is not submitted to the influence of the heavens. Intelligence in its operations is independent of time as of place; it contemplates the universal, for which there is neither time nor place.

Fifthly: it does not act beyond the properties of its species. But the faculty of comprehension surpasses the species and form of every material agent: for every form of body is material and individual, whilst comprehension is immaterial and universal, whence it comes, that in its own form no body can have the faculty of comprehension, and still less the faculty of conferring intelligence upon another being. It is, therefore, manifest by these reasons and others of the same kind, that the celestial bodies are not by themselves the cause of our intellectual operations.

But some one will say the operations of a spirit cannot be effected without the concurrence of bodily faculties. The imagination, memory, intelligence, submitted to the dis-

positions of the body are therefore submitted to the stars, whose influence, like the universal cause, is felt by all bodies. According to the different influences of the stars, we see different complexions and dispositions of bodies, which in their turn come to the aid of the operations of the spirit, or are an obstacle to them. We reply to this objection, that, even admitting this indirect influence, it is absurd to accord to the stars the direction of our wills and the government of human affairs.

In fact, every act of the will proceeds immediately from an act of the intelligence. For the good being the object of the will is a thing previously conceived by the mind. This is the reason why every choice we make has for its object something we believe to be good, even though in the particular choice we make we may deceive ourselves, and choose what is evil. Now the heavens, as we have said, not being the cause of our intelligence, cannot be in themselves the cause of the choice of our will. Further, all that happens here by the influence of celestial bodies happens naturally, because inferior things are naturally subordinate. If, then, our voluntary choice issued from a celestial power it would be a natural effect, and not a free effect, and man then, instead of guiding himself, would be guided by animals deprived of reason, which is clearly absurd. Whatever happens in a natural manner tends towards its end by determined means, and reproduces itself always in the same manner, because nature is determined in her operations to a particular end; but it is not so with the choice of our will; by divers means, in morals as in art, men tend towards the

end they propose. In fine, Nature always acts with precision, with justice: the contrary happening only as an exception. But in the actions of the human will we see every day things happen in a different manner. Similarly also, things which belong to the same species do not vary in the operations which participate in their species. All swallows make their nests in the same manner. But acts of the will, on the contrary, differ amongst themselves because they are free and not instinctive, otherwise virtues and vices would have to be imputed to nature and not to man, and there would no longer be any wisdom nor providence amongst men.

To return to our principal object, no active virtue extends itself beyond the limits of its species, nor transgresses the bounds of the nature of the agent. But to will and to comprehend are two things which exceed all bodily nature, for the intellect extends itself to universal truths, and the will to the universal good.

In the same way, that which relates to an end should be proportioned to that end. Now, human acts are ordained to felicity as to their supreme end: this end does not consist in a bodily good, but in the union of the soul with God, which end surpasses the power of all body, therefore the celestial bodies cannot be in themselves the cause of our actions.

It is necessary then to know that the celestial bodies without being the direct cause of our actions, may by their influence be the occasion of them. Their divers influences acting on the body the soul finds itself variously inclined,

but it can always resist these influences by virtue of its free will. The government of human wishes does not depend upon the stars, but on the free will and Divine providence, for God being the first cause, is the cause of all by Himself and not by accident.

But, according to others, the stars are animated, and it is the soul of the celestial bodies which acts by means of the heavens on our own souls. But reason repels such an error. In fact, every instrumental cause can only act within the limits of its virtue. Now the action of a body cannot in any manner exert itself upon souls so as to change their wills, unless it be, as we have said, by accident: therefore it is impossible that the soul of a celestial body, supposing such a body to be animated, should produce by its movement a direct impression upon the intelligence and will. Besides, if the soul of celestial bodies impressed any action upon our soul by their movements, such action would not reach our soul but by means of a change produced in our body, for bodies act only by an intermediate, and then the action of the stars would not be by themselves the cause of our actions but by accident; that is to say, that our bodies, or other natural bodies, undergoing a change under the influence of celestial bodies, the ideas of good or evil would be suggested to us by the senses, which would objectively impel the will to follow the good and avoid the evil, in such a way, however, that the will may act freely; for as to the exercise of its acts, it is capable of willing or not willing—of thinking or not thinking. In the same way as to the specification of the act, it can accept or refuse the good

which is offered it by the occasion of the influence of the celestial bodies, this good not being anything but corporeal and particular. Were it universal, the will would remain none the less free to make it or not the object of a desire or a thought, as our every-day experience proves. Now from all this it follows that man is master of his actions, and that the government of human life does not depend upon the stars and their direct influence. For neither the heavens nor the soul of the heavens is God, because God is a cause in Himself: so that the worship paid to the sun, the moon, the stars, and other creatures is vain and pernicious. All bodies are made for man, and man should not honour what is inferior to himself. It is easy, therefore, to see from this the vanity of the science of the astrologers, who attribute to the heavens the administration of human affairs, and who pretend to govern men by the inspection and study of the stars. Again, certain astrologers who call themselves Christians, who are so only in name, are compelled to conceal the follies of judicial astrology by many absurdities, and say that the intelligence and will are only in fact submitted to God directly, but, nevertheless, are submitted to the heavens accidentally; that all men, with few exceptions, obey the senses, and that astrologers in their way can foresee the future and give men remedies against the evils which threaten them, and so in a manner they hold the reins of government of human affairs. God, say they, acts upon this lower world by secondary causes, and He governs it by the mediate influence of the celestial bodies. Blinded by this false reasoning and ignorance,

they abstract from the worship of the Divine Majesty, fill men's minds with diabolical superstitions, and endeavour to make them understand that they must accord more faith and attention to the stars than to the immortal God Himself. Convinced of the impossibility of doing anything without the aid of the stars, they endeavour to inspire others with the same convictions.

But it is clear that divining astrology is vain, unworthy of the name of science and art, since the better philosophers have derided it or passed it over in silence, not deigning even to refute it. Passing in review in their works all branches of philosophy they never speak of astrology. Plato and Aristotle, however, studied the stars with much care, but they have not said a word about any science of foretelling the future. If astrology had anything real in it, these profound investigators of nature would have known and occupied themselves with it. But far from being so, Aristotle, and with him the principal philosophers, everywhere say that accidental being, hazard, fortune, future contingencies—in a word, everything that forms the object of astrology, can neither be a science nor an art, since the cause of these is not determined, but uncertain and infinite.

Further, we can only know future events by themselves or their cause; now it is impossible to know them by themselves, since they have not yet happened, and equally impossible to know their cause since they are only future contingents, and because their cause is indifferent about producing or not producing them. Therefore, future contingencies cannot be known in any manner. But supposing

we could know them, it would not be by means of inspecting the stars, as the astrologers unreasonably affirm; for heaven is the universal cause of inferior effects, and by the admission of all philosophy, the knowledge of universal cause cannot lead to the knowledge of a particular effect. The philosophers only deduce particular effects from particular causes. It is thus that in the study of the causes of our maladies, able physicians, instead of studying merely the movements of the moon and the planets, examine more particularly the disposition of the body—the particular and proximate causes whence proceed the morbid effects. Consequently it is a vain belief and folly, a sad ignorance to predict with assurance, like the astrologers, uncertain effects which depend upon free will or indifferent causes: to foretell, in fact, events which perhaps may never take place or may be modified.

Besides, we may easily deny that there are in different parts of the heavens different properties, distinct and even contrary virtues, as the astrologers wish, for the greatest philosophers affirm, after having carefully studied the properties of the heavens, that they exercise upon this world only the action of light and movement. They act by light as by their proper quality, spread over the whole heaven they act by movement, inasmuch as it is the instrument of the first agent, which instrument is only proved by virtue of that movement which it receives from the first mover. Whence, the philosophers conclude, that the diversity of events which ensue in this sublunary world come from two causes—namely: in the first place, from the movement of

the heavens and from light; secondly, from the divers dispositions of matter and particular agents. But this does not suffice yet for the knowledge of effects, because light and movement are universal causes, and their variety designs, in a universal and confused manner, the whole diversity of effects. Hence the necessity for knowing also particular agents and the disposition of matter. That attained, we shall not even then know future contingents, especially those which depend upon free will. Therefore if this be so how can we know by the mere inspection of the stars?

In the same manner, admitting that the properties of the heavens are diverse, astrologers cannot draw from them knowledge of future events, because the particular causes of effects are the proximate causes, and they become the more universal as they are distant from their effects. Therefore the heavens and the stars are more distant from the effects to which they concur, than the elements and natural inferior causes. It is therefore manifest that the different properties of the heavens are more general causes than those that are below the heavens. Now, by inspection of the universal causes which are below the heavens, we cannot arrive at the knowledge of particular effects. For example, from the knowledge of the elementary virtue of fire, or the generative virtue of animals in general, we cannot arrive at the knowledge of a certain tree or man in particular; therefore, from a stronger reason, we may conclude that the mere knowledge of the heavens will not conduct us to that of future events.

Further, if we concede that the virtues of the stars are nearer and more particular than elements and inferior causes,

although that would be absurd, yet judicial astrology would not be the less vain and useless, because it would still be impossible for men to know exactly all those virtues, remote as they are from the senses, whence all knowledge derives its origin. The more clever philosophers, as we have said, have been ignorant of these things. Nay, more, they have never been able to discover the properties nor the differences of the innumerable things which are under the heavens, and which we have, as it were, under our hands. How much less, then, can the astrologers know the properties of the stars, remote from our senses by such a prodigious distance. Certainly, then, the astrologers cannot be placed in the same category with the greater philosophers. And, also, if these virtues of which we speak were known, the astrologers could not in any manner boast of their superstition, because particular agents and inferior causes cannot be established in vain, seeing that in nature nothing is useless. Now if in the heavens there were such a distribution of particular influences that one should relate to the birth of a man, another to that of a certain bull, the inferior agents would then become useless, their only effect would be to dispose matter to receive the form which the celestial influences would confer upon it. But even if it were so, it would not be sufficient to an astrologer to consult the heavens—he must consult also the causes capable of disposing this or that matter to receive a form variable according to the modifications of matter. But this is impossible; a thousand accidents might intervene, which would destroy our calculations, therefore from a still stronger reason the astrologers cannot

know what after all depends upon free will. Consequently it is clear that the government of human affairs does not depend upon the heavens, and that if at any time it did, it must have been by accident, indirectly, and in a general manner. It is ridiculous and vain to wish to regulate the life of man, subject to free will, by means of the inspection of the stars; so that astrology has no solid foundation.

But we have no intention to pursue this subject further; what we have said is sufficient. We have proved the superstitious vanity of astrological knowledge relative to the heavens, and the courses of the stars. Count John Pico di Mirandola, one of the marvels of the world for knowledge, has reduced astrology to nothing in his work on "Disputations:" whoever will read that work will laugh at astrology. We ourselves, in the desire to discredit astrology in the eyes of both learned and ignorant, have composed upon this subject a work in three books.* If any one wish to go more deeply into the matter, let him read it; he will be the more convinced of the vanity, the folly, and the stupidity of judicial astrology.

* "Contra Astrologiam Divinatricem." Lib. iii. Florent. 1851. Venet. 1586. Italice Florent. 1495.

CHAPTER IV.

THAT IDOLATRY IS THE VAINEST OF ERRORS.

WE have shown that the religion of the philosophers, which admitted a worship to be rendered to God as the first cause, was not only insufficient, but erroneous. We have equally proved that the worship rendered to the stars was just as vain and fatal, and, from a stronger reason, the worship rendered to idols, statues of stone and metal, to images of men or beasts, was condemnable and worthy of contempt. It is not, then, difficult to demonstrate how absurd it is to adore for themselves images of stone, wood, or metal, and like things. Evidence dispenses with all demonstration. We posit this proposition as evident; to adore senseless images is a folly. But some will pretend to excuse this folly, by saying that the pagans did not worship these inanimate things for themselves, but they worshipped them as the representations of the gods, as we worship the images of Christ and His saints. We shall prove that the worship rendered by idolatrous people to separate substances, that is to spirits, was a superstitious and impious worship. Thus, then, having treated the extremes, we shall treat of the means, for separated substances are substances mediating between God and heaven. Now we must know,

first (as we have already proved), that the will of man cannot be moved by any agency, nor by the heavens, nor the soul of the heavens, nor by any separated substance, but by God alone. But a thing is said to be moved by another, by means of an agent, when it is moved by an extrinsic principle. I say, then, that the will cannot be moved by an extrinsic principle, save by God, but many things can move it by way of end or object. Many agents, as well corporeal as spiritual, persuade or dissuade, present good or evil, and can thus move the will, which, however, remains free, and master of its own operations. This motion occurs by a mode final; however, it is not properly the cause, but the occasion of the elections of the will. It is an evident fact, that God alone, as an extrinsic principle, can move the will of man, because, as inanimate things naturally tend to their proper end, so in the intellectual substance the will inclines towards its end. Now God, or the author of nature, alone can give natural inclinations, and this is the reason why the philosophers say with reason that things heavy and light are moved by their generator. Therefore it belongs to Him alone, who is the Creator of the intellectual nature, as an extrinsic principle, to incline the will towards an object. This is the privilege of God alone, because the intellective soul comes not from the power of matter, but from that creative power which is God, who gives to creatures their powers and their operations.

The order which exists in corporeal substances exists still more perfectly in spiritual substances. Now in corporeal substances all movement proceeds from a first movement, so

in spiritual substances all movement of the will proceeds from the first will, that is, God; whence it follows that God can move the will as agent and as end: as agent immediately, and as end mediately and immediately. However, in whatever manner He acts upon the will, He does not act violently, because God gives to things the movement which the form of each requires. Thus it remains certain that God alone, the principle and mover of all wills, the absolute Master of the universe deserves to be worshipped. Other intelligences may be honoured, inasmuch as they participate in the first cause, but it is not permitted to offer them worship and sacrifice. This worship is only due to God, and the Christian religion renders it to Him alone, although it honours the memory of the saints. But such is not the worship rendered to idols, for it is certain that they offered to them incense and sacrifices, and demanded of them oracles or predictions of the future, which could be known only to God.

But someone may say, that although these sacrifices were offered to different Gods, the intention, however, was directed towards the sole true God, as in the idol they worshipped God Himself. Even if we accord this, which is difficult to accord, at least to the multitude, the worship of idols could not then be absolved from all reproach; in fact, in the rites, in nearly all their mysteries, there were vain actions contrary to good manners. And if anyone pretend that we must accuse only the depravation of wicked men who sullied the purity of a legitimate worship, it will be easy to convince him of falsehood by history, for it attests the fact that in all

the universe the greatest men have observed those rites and celebrated those mysteries.

But let us grant this point. Can we deny that the spirits honoured by the pagans were execrable and bad spirits? This worship, then, was rendered to depraved intelligences contrary to God, and in whom God, consequently, could not be honoured. This is proved by many reasons: first, a created intelligence, when it is in a state of rectitude, not only turns itself to the first cause and honours it, but disposes to that end other beings in order that God may be glorified in all things, He who makes all things. But the spirits worshipped by the pagans, in the numerous oracles which they rendered, never taught anything to men of a pure life or a legitimate worship; on the contrary, they taught the reverse, or at least consented to disorder and rejoicing in their iniquitous seduction arrogated to themselves the worship due only to God. Such was for the world the cause of the errors into which it was plunged, and of its forgetfulness of God.

Secondly, good spirits never foment hatred—never drive men to crime nor teach them such evils. Now the gods of paganism were at discord and war amongst themselves, they committed sacrileges, incests, a thousand shameful crimes of which they did not proclaim the culpability, which they did not detest, thus leaving men in ignorance about things which every honest mind could neither approve nor understand, resulting, as regards the world, in the worst possible examples.

And if God, who is perfect under all circumstances, who has need of nothing, since nothing is wanting to His per-

fection and blessedness, does not rejoice in the worship we render to Him only on account of ourselves and not on account of Him, this worship being for us a cause of perfection and happiness, He can only wish one thing, namely, that we should resemble Him, for every right intelligence tends to render itself conformable to its author. If, therefore, the Pagan gods had been good spirits, they would have laboured for the perfection of men.

For it is the property of every cause to perfect the effect it produces according to the type of goodness it contains, and, in turn, that the effect produced may seek to produce its like; now knowledge of Divine things principally contributes to the perfection of man. If, then, the spirits which the pagans adored had been good, they would, by their oracles, have conducted men to the knowledge of God: they would have led them to honour, to pray, to love one sole God, sovereign Master of all things. But the spirits of their gods did not act thus. In fact, before the coming of Christ, ignorance and evil covered the entire world with dense darkness. Men sitting in the shadow of death were utterly ignorant of Divine things, for the gods withdrew them with all their power from the true God by a thousand vanities and deceptions. The philosophical schools, such as those of Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, taught more truths about God than could be learned in the temples, and the philosophers were of more value than even the gods and the priests.

In the same way, if these gods had been good spirits they would have instructed men upon the question of happiness,

which kept the world in such anxiety; they would have taught them the true final end and the virtues which lead to it, and they would have thus supplied what was wanting in the doctrines of the philosophers. For it is the character of a good spirit, who occupies itself with man and who cares for him, to teach him the end of life and the means of attaining to it.

Otherwise, what would be its use? What a good man would do a good spirit ought to do with a greater reason. But the pagan gods did not act in this manner, but threw men's minds into confusion, whence it came to pass that before the preaching of Christ, humanity was totally ignorant of its end, and of the means of pursuing its way towards it.

Besides, good spirits are not liars, and do not deceive men, because lies and deception are always evil. But the spirits of these gods frequently offered falsehood in their responses and led men into error. The knowledge of future contingencies belongs only to God, who embraces all things in His immutable eternity. However, these spirits had the audacity to make predictions, and to arrogate to themselves what belonged only to God. They, in this way, usurped the Divine majesty; they robbed Him of His glory, and plunged men into an abyss of superstitions, whence it was impossible to issue. Sometimes they endeavoured to discover the secrets of the future by inspecting the entrails of beasts offered in sacrifice. At others, they sought that impossible knowledge in the flight or the song of birds, drawing men with themselves into the same follies. Certainly, good spirits would not have acted in this manner.

Every sensible man may judge of the vanity and ridicule of these practices. The gods also favoured magic and its shameful mysteries, accompanied with adulteries, infanticides, and a thousand other abominations which the laws forbid, whence one may affirm with certainty that the gods of the nations were only demons. In the same way no good spirit rejoices in cruelty. But in the sacrifices of the pagans the gods made them offer not only animals, but men, especially innocent creatures, infants, young girls, virgins, which was the cause of the death of an infinite number of children, offered frequently by the parents themselves. After the preaching of the Apostles, when the temples of these gods were reversed, a prodigious quantity of human bones was discovered, another proof that the Gentile gods were demons conjured together for the destruction of the human race.

We might still have enumerated an infinitude of evils brought into the world by the worship of idols; but as, by the immense benefit of the redemption of our Lord Jesus Christ, idolatry has been reversed, and there is no one to-day who is not well instructed in this subject, we shall say no more. Besides, the most learned men in Christian antiquity have sufficiently treated upon it. Therefore, if the gods of the Gentiles had been veritable gods, Christ would not have completely destroyed them—He would not have universally destroyed their worship and their altars.

CHAPTER V.

FALSE FAITH AND ERROR OF THE JEWS.—REFUTATION.

THE light of natural reason was so enfeebled before the coming of Christ, that without the succour of our Lord in this lost world, men would have sunk below the brutes, though they were superior to them in their passion and genius for evil: human intelligence is so weak and so infirm, when it has not, as an auxiliary, a power from above. But as many have abused the gift of the supernatural light, and principally the Jews, it is against them that we turn the attack at present; and we shall show that those rites which they preserve do not please God, and detract from His glory; that reason cannot defend them, but only obstinacy and impudence.

Although the Jews proudly rely upon the Old Testament, this doctrine which they love, corrupted with their perverted reason and ungrateful contempt, is vain.

All their hopes are placed in a Messiah; and if we can show that that Messiah has already appeared, that He has been, that He was Jesus of Nazareth, Son of God, He whom we admire and adore, will they then deny that our religion comes from heaven, and that they are convinced of their error? The arguments in our favour furnished in the

second book of this work might suffice them, and more than suffice them, for if Jesus Christ be not the true Messiah, where can any being be found superior to Him? Who will teach us a purer morality, a more Divine worship? And to turn their weapons upon themselves we shall invoke the Scriptures against them. But we shall pass over this subject rapidly, since it has been treated in a superior manner by the wise doctors whose works are in the possession of the Church.

We are bound, according to promise, to employ arguments of reason rather than authority; but could we reason more peremptorily than by referring to those Scriptures in which the Jews believe? The sceptics, too, will not listen to us without benefit, for they will see that the deeds accomplished by Christ were predicted many years before in certain prophecies. Thus, Jesus of Nazareth, whom the Jews crucified, is the true Messiah—He whom all their patriarchs and prophets announced—He whose advent was preceded by so many mysterious signs—whom they, too, expected: this is what we shall easily prove, by establishing certain points, which are recognised by all, and evident in themselves.

First, then, it is established beyond doubt, that in the Scriptures, God promised to the Jews a Saviour, a great prophet, their future prince, whom they should obey in everything. This is what they unanimously confess even now.

So Moses, in Deuteronomy xviii., addresses the people in these terms:—

"I will raise them up a prophet among their brethren,

like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him."

It is therefore certain, and recognised by all the Jews, that in the Holy Scriptures, as well in the Mosaic law as the prophets and Psalms, the conditions are determined under which the Messiah shall appear—His origin, His country, His time, His life, His doctrine, His acts, and other things which are the traits of the true Messiah.

It is equally manifest, and established in a thousand writings, that the characteristics, by which, according to the Old Testament, we are to recognise the Messiah, were realised in Jesus of Nazareth, whom the Jews crucified, and that there is not a word in the Mosaic law, the prophets and the Psalms, which does not refer to the Messiah. The figures of the Old Testament accord not only with the person of Jesus of Nazareth, but also to the deeds accomplished by the Church after His death.

We must, then, demand of the Jews if Jesus is the true Messiah or not: if He is the true Messiah, why do they not follow Him and embrace Christianity, since God has commanded them to follow the Messiah? If Jesus is not the Messiah, how is it that God, after having promised that He would send the Holy of Holies, whose character He described, and whom all should follow: how is it, we ask, that He has permitted these predictions to be accomplished in the person of someone else? For if Jesus be not the

Messiah expected by the Jews with so much desire, we must admit one of these three hypotheses: either that God did not know that Jesus would come, in whom all that He had predicted should be accomplished; or, knowing it, He could not prevent it; or, if He could, He would not.

Now, it would be foolish to admit either of these propositions, for if God knew it and could hinder it, why did He not wish to do so? Is it possible that God could deceive us? But the Christians cannot be blamed by the Jews for following Jesus of Nazareth, seeing that all the sacred oracles, all the figures of the Old Testament are more adapted to him than any other.

For if He is not the Messiah, it is in vain that we wait for another, for it would be a folly to believe that a Messiah like unto Him could again be given. Let the Jews think in good faith of the Old Testament, and of what has been done by Jesus Christ through His Church. If a new Messiah were to come, as they expect, what Divine sign could they find in him that they may not find in Jesus of Nazareth? If they were not hardened on account of their perfidy they would recognise that these things are clearer than the day; besides, the time predicted in the Holy Scriptures touching the coming of the Messiah has passed a long time, and if it be not Christ, there has not appeared any other Messiah to whom the prophecies may be applied. Then Jesus of Nazareth must be the Messiah expected; for either the Scriptures are false—a supposition which even the Jews would repel—or, in recognising the truth of the Scriptures, we must recognise Jesus as the Messiah.

That the time has already passed is evident; for first that prophecy of Jacob is noteworthy: "The sceptre shall not pass from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be" (Gen. xlix. 10); or, according to the Chaldee version, which has the greater authority amongst the Jews, "until the *Messiah* come." We read also in the ninth chapter of Daniel—"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

By these words we can easily know that Jesus is the true Messiah, because those weeks have passed away a long

time ago, and no one, up to this time since, has appeared to whom the words would apply but Jesus Christ, for in the Holy Scriptures, the word week, signifies either seven days or seven years, as we may see, Leviticus xxiii. and xxv. Then seventy weeks would give 490 years, but from the time of Daniel to our day more than four times the number of years have rolled by. And if the Jews say that Daniel attached any other sense to the word "week" than that in Leviticus, we demand of them what space of time they understand, and if they cannot invoke the Scriptures they must rest convinced either of error or of bad faith. For if the word in this passage had an isolated and new sense which Daniel had omitted to notice, the prophecy of the seventy weeks would then be useless, and a cause of error to all who search after the truth.

But since, according to all legitimate and unanimous interpretation, the time predicted has passed, it follows that the Messiah has come, and no one can reply with truth that the Christ who was to come was expected at a time *undetermined after* the weeks enumerated by Daniel, because the prophet would then have determined nothing certain concerning the circumstances of the coming of the Messiah, but he says clearly—"From the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks." And then a little further—"And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease."

Certainly the words of this prophecy cannot be applied to any one more appropriately than to Jesus Christ. Whence it follows that it was made concerning Him, otherwise, God himself, as we have already said, would have been the cause of our error if He had permitted, though able to prevent it, that this prophecy should be applied to another than the true Messiah.

In fine, Jesus came to dissipate errors and to conduct men to virtue and happiness, and this He did by the preaching of His Apostles; and it is therefore justly said, "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city," because the Apostles first preached to the Jews, "to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins." Now all these things have been accomplished, and as though the lips of the prophet only moved to speak of Jesus, the text adds with reason—"And to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy," that is, that Jesus Christ, who was the Holiest of the holy, might be anointed by the Holy Spirit.

But because different memorable events were to take place at the same time, the prophet makes an exact enumeration of them. First, he mentions seven weeks, because during the course of these years the temple and city were rebuilt with great difficulty, as we read in Ezra and Nehemiah. Secondly, he reckons sixty-two weeks, during which the Jews were oppressed, as we read in the history of the Maccabees. Thirdly, he reckons one week (seven years), because Jesus commenced preaching at the beginning of that period, and was put to death in the middle, having

preached three years and a half. Then the Apostles preached the Gospel to the people, announcing that the victims and sacrifices which prefigured Christ were no longer necessary, and should not be offered, because the figure should cease in presence of the reality, and the prophecy says clearly—"Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and three score and two weeks," because at the end of these weeks and at the commencement of the seventieth, Christ began to preach and reveal himself to the people, and the Jews began to contrive His death, and executed Him in the middle of the week (seven years); and because, in the presence of Pilate the Jews themselves denied Him, saying, "We will have no king but Cæsar," they were justly reproved by God, who punished the crime and called in their place the Gentiles: that is why the prophet says, "And the people of the Prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary" (the Roman people under Vespasian and Titus); and, in fine, the text goes on to show us the Jews for ever dispersed and sold, and the city destroyed as well as the temple; "and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined."

But God had promised to patriarchs and prophets to send the Messiah, who opening to them the kingdom of heaven, should preach a new law, as it is said in the 31st chapter of Jeremiah, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with

the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake: but this shall be the covenant, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people." This is why Daniel adds, "And he shall confirm"—that is, by His blood and the preaching of the Apostles—"the covenant"—that is, the New Testament—"to many,"—not to all, because all have not believed—"in a week, and in the middle of the week, he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease," because in the middle of that (prophetic) week Jesus Christ was put to death—He whom all the sacrifices of the ancient law prefigured, by whom the darkness shall vanish when the light appears. God permits also that the ancient temple, henceforth of no use, should be profaned, and finally utterly destroyed. That is why we read again, "And for the overspreading of abominations, he shall make it desolate." In fact, in the very spot where the Ark of the Covenant rested, they raised the statue of the Emperor Adrian.

This is what Daniel calls *abomination*, because an idol was so called by the Jews; or one may say that the term abomination applies to the sacrifices of the law, which had become an abomination in the eyes of God. In fine, as the Jews were not to be converted to Christ till the end of the world, Daniel concludes in these terms, "even until the consummation,"—which is equally confirmed by Hosea: "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king,

and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim: after which shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king (Christ, the Son of David, their king); and they shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days."

See, then, with what facility and what justice we explain this prophecy, and apply it to Jesus of Nazareth; and it is so with other prophecies, if anyone will read them attentively.

But to return to our subject: it is manifest that the time of the advent of the Messiah has long passed. The qualification of Messiahship, not being applicable to Jesus of Nazareth, the period indicated by the Divine oracles having passed, and the various occasions mentioned by Jewish doctors having deceived them, it is folly and impiety in the Jews to expect another Messiah.

Their last captivity proves the same thing, if in considering all the events of their history, we compare this last captivity with that of Babylon, so often predicted by the prophets.

In fact, they themselves affirm in their books that the Babylonian captivity was the result of their crimes, their innumerable vices, especially their idolatry—that greatest of all vices. Their chiefs, their prophets, their holy men, assembled together to console them in that captivity with the promise that, according to the prophets, it could only endure for 70 years; but their last captivity has already lasted more than fifteen centuries (1452-1498), during which time, deprived of all Divine consolation, they have had

neither chiefs, prophets, nor saints, who have ventured to predict to them the end of this captivity. However, they cannot find in idolatry the cause of this affliction, since after the Babylonian exile, with the exception of some, among whom were the Maccabees, the Jews have not been guilty of that crime.

What, then, is the cause of the Divine anger against them? Whence comes it that, dispersed over the world, they are the despised and hated of all peoples, and that they drag after them this heavy chain of expiation? Why is it?

O, Jews! ye are dispersed in order that ye might bear everywhere in your writings the testimony that our Christ was the Messiah, for other peoples may regard us as suspected witnesses of the truth.

Why is it that, fifteen centuries after the destruction of Jerusalem, you wander over the world hateful to all nations, are still under the yoke of suffering and outrage? What is the cause of the Divine anger against you? Why does not the God of mercy cast a look of pity, after so long an expiation, upon that chosen race whom He so consecrated? How is it that, after their crimes, their idolatry, the Jews only suffered a captivity of 70 years, under which they were sustained and consoled by the oracles of the prophets; and now, after this long captivity, no Divine consolation supports them in their miserable condition? They are, then, guilty of a greater crime even than idolatry! For what crime can be greater than to contemn, persecute, and kill the Messiah, who was promised to them? Let them, then,

in spite of all their misfortunes, confess that this Jesus, upon whom they heaped so many outrages, was their true Messiah.

And, as we can no longer find a holiness or a love of Divine worship amongst them equal to their love of gold, so are they deprived of all prophecy, of every sign which proves that God is with them; and, as on the other hand, they may see amongst the Gentiles numberless works of holiness, it is manifest that that prophecy of Malachi is accomplished :—

"I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of Hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand; for from the rising of the sun even to the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering; for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of Hosts." (Ch. i. 10, 11.)

Therefore, if God be not with the Gentiles, it would follow that, since He has abandoned the Jews, He no longer exerts His providence on earth, which is absurd.

In the same manner, if God does not neglect small things, He neglects much less great things. Now, by the mouth of the prophets, He has predicted things much less great than those which have been done on earth by Christ and His Apostles. In fact, we have prophecies relating to the smallest kingdoms, like those concerning the Idumeans, the Moabites, the Ammonites, and others. It would, then, be very astonishing if nothing had been predicted concerning the admirable works of Jesus Christ and His Apostles, who have changed the face of the world; and that all the evils

which strangers have done to the Jews have been so predicted with great exactness. For what people has caused the Jews more evil than the Christian empire? If there had never been any mention of that empire, it is in vain that the prophets in the least things had warned them with so much solicitude, and kept silence upon the greater perils which menaced their religion and national existence.

Therefore, it is impossible not to acknowledge that the prophets have spoken of Jesus Christ and His works. This, too, becomes more striking if we attentively read the Scriptures and the deeds of Christ, for we shall see that the prophecies can only apply to Him: therefore Christ is the true Messiah, unless we admit, which would be thoroughly impious and absurd, that God has deceived us.

Once more, we see in the history of the Jews that God, before the coming of Christ, did marvels for them beyond number, such as we can find nowhere else. Now, Christ having come, and the Jews having rejected Him, God has withdrawn His hand from them and deprived them of all grace, which is proved by their blindness; for after they despised the truth, their Talmud science is but a tissue of fables and falsehoods. And in the explication of the Holy Scriptures, the inveterate habit they had contracted of falsifying the truth, hindered them from any sense of shame of the most manifest errors. What shall I say? Licence in error and falsehood has become so familiar to them that they seem to glory in their temerity and persistent obstinacy.

We might have brought many more arguments against them, but because the truth has been sufficiently exposed by

many learned men, we shall content ourselves with these reasons, which, joined to those given in the second book, prove in the most certain manner that Jesus of Nazareth is the true God, true Messiah, in whom both law and prophecy ceased.

CHAPTER VI.

THAT THE DOCTRINE OF THE HERETICS IS FALSE, EVIL, PERVERSE, AND CORRUPT.

WE must now combat and dispute against heretics, who, although they confess the same Jesus Christ and the same Gospel as we, yet are plunged in a thousand errors. It would be too long and too tiresome to review their errors in detail: they have been well refuted by the orthodox fathers; but we shall direct our attack generally. We shall prove, then, in the first place, that the Church of Jesus Christ must necessarily be governed by one sole chief. If heretics, in effect, believe that the Divine providence governs the world, and especially His Church, for which He has done so many things, they must also confess that that kind of government—by one alone—is the best that can be imagined, since it has been established and ordained by Him who governs at once the heavens and the earth. The government of one, then, is better, since the multitude is more effectually united and ruled by one chief than by many, and because that union is no other thing than peace —the true end of a well-established government. Therefore, since the government of the Church is greater and

better than all, it is necessary that the Church should be governed by one alone.

And, besides, the government of inferior things naturally follows that of superior, which makes it the more perfect, as it is nearer: therefore the government of the Church militant, which follows step by step that of the Church triumphant, should only belong to one alone, as the elect in heaven have only one God as governor.

And we know, further, that supernatural things are better ordered than natural; therefore when we see that even natural things, when they have any form of government, are always under the authority of one—just as with the bees the empire belongs only to one queen, and in the members of a human body which are ruled and governed by the heart. Then, since the government of the Church is most excellent, it should have only one chief.

Further, all the heretics are in accord with us as to what concerns the New Testament alone, or as to what concerns the Old and New Testament together, though they may not agree amongst themselves nor with us upon the interpretation of Scripture. Now, in the two Testaments, we find it ordained that there shall only be one chief in the Church. Do you not know what God formerly ordered upon this point by the prophet Hosea? "Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head." (Hos. i. 11.) The Saviour Himself says, in St. John, "There shall be one fold and one shepherd." (John x. 16. Now, it cannot be denied that Jesus Christ was the Head of the Church, and when

He ascended to heaven He would not leave the Church without any other chief than Himself, seeing that in such a case it would become a prey to divisions, confusion, and disorder; and therefore He said to Peter, "Feed my sheep." "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." And again, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven;"* from which we may see clearly that Jesus Christ established Peter as His vicar upon earth, and promised that His Church should continue to the end of the world. "Lo! I am with you alway even unto the end of the world." What the prophet Isaiah had already said, "He shall sit on the throne of David," &c.

As to the kingdom of Jesus Christ and the Church militant, it will not only continue to the end of the world, for after the world shall be renewed, it shall continue for ever in heaven in the Church triumphant.

Therefore, since the heretics, after combating against the Church, have always fallen in the fight, and their sects and false doctrines have been dispersed and beaten down, it is clear that their assemblies and reunions are not, and never have been, the true Church: that their doctrine does not come from God, as their lives, soiled and blackened by sin, clearly show. Nor have their chiefs ever been honoured

* In allusion to the custom of Jewish Rabbis, who, when they settled disputed points of law, "bound" it or "loosed" it, as the case may be. The two Talmuds are full of instances of dissension: one Rabbi "bound" a certain case; another Rabbi "loosed it."

like the saints of the Church. Their books, too, are full of errors, and manifest vanities contrary not only to the Scriptures, but to natural reason and sound philosophy. Therefore, their doctrine cannot come from God. But we have said sufficient upon this point, and our doctors have completely refuted the heretics.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SECT OF MAHOMETANS IS ALTOGETHER UNREASONABLE.

THE Mahometans, placed in some measure between the Jews and heretics, practise on the one hand circumcision, and on the other gather together from all sides the old heresies, so that we can easily refute them. For those who frequent them, who live amongst them, who know their form of religion, and who read their Koran, soon remark the error and vanity of Mahomet and his followers.

In fact, all religion must proceed from natural or supernatural light. Now, Mahometanism proceeds from neither one nor the other, and every man only a little versed in philosophy will refute it easily. Mahomet also was very ignorant and incapable, or he would not have composed the Koran in so confused a manner that no one can restore it to order—a manifest sign of ignorance and want of judgment. There are also in the Koran so many fables and so many discourses contrary to modesty, that our time would be better employed in deriding than refuting them.

Therefore, Mahometanism being contrary to the light of nature, cannot come from that light; and it certainly does not come from any supernatural light, for whatever is con-

trary to the light of nature is also contrary to supernatural light.

Further, whatever starts from a bad principle, rarely attains to any good end. Now, Mahometanism issued from Mahomet, who, according to history, was a man of false spirit, a villain, an adulterer, and a devastator. Being subject to the falling sickness, he had repeated attacks, and fell before all the people. When they enquired the cause of this falling, he replied that it took place at the moment when an angel visited him and spoke to him. Thus he concealed his weakness by a vile imposture.

But this man managed to collect around him, more by force and stratagem than by reason, a strong body of men —thieves, criminals, base and ignorant men—and by their aid he subdued a number of tribes, whom he compelled to adopt his corrupt manners and his erroneous dogmas. Such an origin was neither from God, nor could it lead to any good end.

This is not all: the Mahometans everywhere in the Koran profess a great respect for the two Testaments: they honour Christ; they regard Him as a great prophet, born of a virgin. How comes it then that they were so absurd as to approve in one place what they denied in another? Affirming the Christian doctrine, and following one opposed to it? Their excuse is ridiculous: they say, "You have corrupted the Old and New Testament." But where is the proof? The different versions, the Hebrew text, the Greek, the Latin, those even in Oriental idioms, have been preserved in all places and through all times in integrity and conformity?

Whence comes this marvellous concord? or, rather, how could a corruption of texts become so general in spite of the different idioms, the multiplicity of peoples, times, and manners. Certainly, the accord of texts and versions is rather the proof that the Koran is but a tissue of fables and falsehoods, compiled from the Holy Scriptures and by altering the true sense.

True religion has for its end a pure and humble life: it is co-ordained to this end by purity of heart and contemplation of truth. But Mahometanism, a sect altogether earthly in its desires, only aspires after riches, without occupying itself with the true happiness; and after this life it only promises to its adherents gross pleasures of sense. The entire context of the Koran proves that its subject is not merely metaphor, but that Mahomet has spoken in a literal sense, and knew well how to circulate his lying promises—an additional proof of the falsehood of his religion.

There is nothing Divine in Mahometanism, nothing admirable which can persuade us it comes from God. It does not, like Christianity, rely upon miracles. Mahomet said himself that Christ received power to work miracles to convert the world; but as for himself, God had armed him with a sword to submit all people to the faith of the Koran, and to make, as a sacrifice to God, an inconceivable mixture of tyranny and voluptuousness. The greatest merit among the Mahometans is to say, "God is God, and Mahomet is His prophet." The Koran repeats, unceasingly, "God is great," "God is powerful," and other things equally well known.

Mahometanism has not had great men, properly speaking, no sacred writer, no prophet, no saint, but only fanatics who beat themselves, and commit a thousand extravagances which the vulgar admire, but which contain no knowledge of Divine things.

Mahomet contradicts and belies himself even to declare that he does not know whether he and his followers are in the way of salvation, and no one in the world can understand his law. Therefore, professing an unintelligible law, and leaving men in doubt about their salvation, I am surprised that Mahomet had not been stoned by the people in hatred of a law which authorised nothing, neither miracles, nor virtues. We can only deride it.

Would to God it were possible to go and preach the truth to the Mahometans; for I am sure it would be easy to convince them of error and impiety. But Mahomet, with a singular stratagem, has provided against this danger by forbidding, under pain of death, what he could not forbid with any reason.

But some may think it astonishing that, in spite of the Christian law in the world, the law of Mahomet would be established, and should even detach a great number of men from the Christian religion. "Does it not appear," they say, "that Mahomet has triumphed over the Son of God?" Perhaps even his followers may say that God is with them, and that their belief is good since their reign has continued so long. And, indeed, it is an argument which has troubled the head of many Christians not well assured in the faith. But we reply to all this that that reason cannot vanquish,

nor in any way diminish, what we have already said when we proved that Jesus Christ is very God, and that the Christian faith and religion are the true faith and religion, from which we can never depart for such a foolish argument, seeing that we can discover, neither in the law of Mahomet nor in any other, a better life, nor more excellent principles, than in the Christian religion. We may add, that if the argument of Mahomet were conclusive, we should be compelled to say also that the devil is better than Jesus Christ, because he has won to his empire more men than Jesus Christ and Mahomet. Thus we should follow the impiety of the wicked rather than the piety and devotion of just men, seeing that the number of bad men is greater than the good. Certainly it is a fine argument to prefer Mahomet to Jesus Christ because he has subdued so many people by the sword! It is a fine thing to place oneself under a brutal and unreasonable law! Our religion certainly has no such proofs; it has not been established in that way. But it is not surprising that only a small number follow Jesus, because He commands men to live well, and to suffer death for invisible benefits. If that proof in favour of Mahomet were good, it would subvert not only all supernatural doctrine, but philosophy itself, because then it would be necessary to say that good is evil, and truth is false, and light is only darkness. Certainly, if what the majority of men believe is true, I do not know how the world subsists, since those who live according to reason are so few in number. In fine, we shall reply that as Jesus Christ has always permitted that those who do not walk in the truth

should freely lose themselves, He has also permitted Mahomet to corrupt so many people, on account of their sins. And we believe also that if God had so willed, and if the sins of men had not provoked Him, Mahomet would never have perverted so many poor souls. In fact, if Jesus Christ, when He was not well known to men, and the world was filled with idolatry, could gain men to His love, and subject them to His law, by prodigies unheard of and without the aid of force, how much more could He not do now that He reigns in glory and the whole world recognises his empire! But He has, as we have said, tolerated this error and this evil on account of the sins of the world. Besides, it is not a thing contrary, but conformable to the faith that only a small number should be worthy of the name of Christian, and that many should reject the Gospel, seeing that Jesus Christ himself said, "For many are called, but few are chosen."

But in fact the Church now increases and now diminishes. We all have free will; and God, who forces no one to do well, draws us only to Himself by love, by gentleness, by the promise of eternal felicity;* whilst he reserves for the wicked infinite punishment. Therefore did God say to the

* Baur, in his excellent work, "The Christian Element in Plato; or, Socrates and Christ," where he speaks of the infinite advantage of Christianity over Platonism, uses almost the same words.—"Im Naturleben ist es das unauflösliche Band der Nothwendigkeit, welches die Umlenkung bewirkt, aber das Menschenleben folgt den sanften Zug einer vom Himmel stammenden und zum Himmel führenden Liebe, da der Grundzug aller Liebe das Begehren, des Guten ist, auf Gott, das höchste Gut geht." "In the life of Nature it is the indissoluble bond of necessity which operates: but the life of man follows the gentle *drawing* of a heaven-descending heaven-ending love; for the principle of all love, the desire of good, mounts up to God, the Highest Good."—"Das Christliche im Platonisms Tubingen," 1837, p. 4.

prophet Isaiah, "Make the heart of this people fat and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed." Such was the first punishment inflicted upon the Jews for their sins: blindness and obstinacy of spirit—a punishment pronounced against them by Jesus Christ himself and by His prophets. We read also in Holy Scripture that a great number would abandon the faith. Jesus Christ, speaking in the Gospel of the last days, says, "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." And elsewhere, "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith still upon the earth?" This is what the Apostle Paul expresses still more clearly, speaking to Timothy: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils."

In short, if we read the evangelical doctrine, we shall there find everything predicted by Jesus Christ, as we see it happen by His permission on account of the foolish ingrati tude and malice of men whom He has allowed to fall into that blindness, as into the greatest of all punishments, because it leads to eternal woe.

But someone will say, "What, is it not unjust that children should be punished for the sins of the father? If the Jews and Mahometans have formerly offended God, He would punish them, but would not subject their children and all their descendants to punishment." But to this we reply, that since the faith of Jesus Christ has been

published and manifested in all the world, there is no person who can be excused for not believing.

Children will not be punished with their fathers if they do not follow the sins of their fathers. Men are inexcusable for not having faith, since by following the light of natural reason, and remitting their well-being and their salvation into the hands of God, they would certainly attain to the light of faith. For God never injures His creatures, and will never forget to give them what they require. Still, we know there are judgments of God impenetrable to human reason. According to St. Paul, God has permitted that man should be as it were shut up in incredulity, in order that he may show mercy to all (Rom. xi. 32). The Apostle, reflecting upon the inscrutable profound abyss of the counsels of God, suddenly exclaims, "Oh, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways are past finding out. For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

It is also necessary to know that as Jesus Christ has predicted these future evils, He has also predicted that His Church shall continue always, "For lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." In the same way, then, as we have seen that He has announced the evils that shall come upon the world, we must also believe, without hesitation, that the good He has prophesied will endure as

long as the evil: for the Church is built upon a sure foundation, and it would be a great folly to think it will ever fall. Therefore we hope that as God has ever punished false Christians, he will renew His Church all over the world; will protect it from all dangers, and will cause that there shall be only one shepherd and one fold. Without doubt this blessing will not tarry, but will come, and the bark of St. Peter will always float upon the waters, sometimes with a tranquil sea and sometimes the contrary, until the day of judgment. But the law of Mahomet being founded neither upon natural reason nor Divine, having no support but force and the terror of arms, cannot endure long; for that which is violent is not durable.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION IS TRUE IN EVERY POINT. ITS STABILITY.

SINCE, as we have said, every religion arises and proceeds either from natural or supernatural light, or from both, if there should be found any other religion or superstition, it must be placed in the number of those we have already mentioned, and be refuted upon the same principles. To resume, then, and to call to mind what we have said concerning all these old sects, heresies, and superstitions, we repeat that every religion which proceeds only from natural light, or from true principles of natural reason, is nothing else than the religion of philosophers, which, as we have proved, is insufficient for salvation. We say, still, that there are other religions born from false principles, from things of nature or false principles invented by demons. In the first case we have to combat astrology, an error already refuted; in the second, idolatry, invented by the father of lies, which we have also vanquished and condemned for sufficient reasons.

Further, there are in the world supernatural religions such as those founded upon the Old and New Testaments. The one, which is the error of the Jews, wishing to repose only

upon the Old Testament, has also been refuted by us; the other, perverting the texts and changing the sense of the New Testament, constitutes the heresies. A third religion, in fine, Mahometanism, confounds and rejects altogether the two Testaments. The Christian religion alone is founded upon both, and embraces at once natural and supernatural truths.

Therefore, since these are all the religions of the world, and that the Christian religion is elevated above them by reason, miracles, and virtue, as the heavens are raised above the earth, without doubt that religion is the true religion, the asylum and sure haven of salvation.

But if anyone should object that a better religion may one day appear upon the earth and detract from the Christian faith, we reply that, as the Christian religion is incontestably the best, we must, without hesitation, follow that until a better appears; and further, as there is no reason to believe nor think that any better religion can ever appear in the world, seeing that we can find no better end, no surer means, no more perfect life, no greater things, no more admirable than in Christianity, it is utterly impossible that any better religion can ever appear.

But, supposing that a better religion than Christianity may appear, it does not follow that it would condemn or vanquish Christianity. For this, as we have already shown in our second book, taking its source in supernatural light, can only be from God: it has produced so much good in the world; it has operated so many marvels that God alone can be its author. Christianity, then, is in the utmost

possible degree in conformity with the wisest principles of reason which also comes from God. Therefore, if a new religion should appear in the world better and more perfect than Christianity, whether it depended upon reason alone or had issued from supernatural light, it could not be contrary to Christianity. Then, since truth is in accord with truth, a religion coming from God could not be opposed to Christianity. Both would be from God—the source of the double light of nature and grace, in which contradiction cannot exist, and which never teaches at one time what is true and at another what is false. Perish the blasphemy which would impute falsehood and imposture to God! Our mind is utterly unable to find the truth if it can only be found in the presence of contrary reasons equally solid. Now, if contrary reasons come from God, He would be the cause of our inability to find the truth, which is repugnant to God. If, therefore, our religion, the issue of supernatural light, is at the same time conformable to reason, it must be in harmony with every true belief, whatever it may be.

CHAPTER IX.

EPILOGUE AND CONCLUSION.

IN order to impart force to what we have said, we shall resume our work in a short epilogue. We say, then, that Christians are not lightly, but very prudently borne, to believe and preserve the belief in Jesus Christ; for it is the mark of a wise man to believe that there is one God, that is to say, a prime mover, a first cause of all things, after considering the immense grandeur and admirable order of the universe: seeing that all things receive motion from no one else, it is necessary to conclude the existence of a prime mover. And as spirit is more noble than body—God being the most noble Being—a spirit, a simple substance and an independent existence, it follows that He is perfection itself, the supreme good and infinite power: He is alone God—eternal and immutable.

And as we believe that the more the nobler things are elevated above matter they are the richer in knowledge, we cannot therefore deny that the intelligence and knowledge of God are greater, and the freedom with which He operates without any necessity of nature is the property of His will. If, therefore, God operates all things, even the least, solely by His intelligence and will, He is the Provi-

dence of all things, and especially of man, for whom He has created that which is called Nature. It is, therefore, the prerogative of God to conduct man to his proper end, which consists in the contemplation and meditation of Divine things, as we have proved above.

This meditation, with the grace of God, conducts us to the blessedness and true felicity which cannot exist here, and this reason compels us to confess and to wait for another life, and to believe that our soul is immortal and the form of our body. Without this we shall never avoid the crowd of inconveniences which will ensue, as we have shown.

Considering, therefore, the order established in Nature, it results that the faith says nothing of God and the felicity of man, which is not full of reason and prudence.

If we place, then, before our eyes the Triumph of the Cross, which we have so carefully delineated in this work, we shall suddenly comprehend how Christians believe and embrace so holily the Cross of the Redeemer. Also, we shall have no doubt that there is not any other religion in the world, true and holy, since men are veritably inclined towards the worship and service of God as to the sole means of arriving at eternal glory.

Now, since the end of this worship is a good life, and that a good life is the essence of the worship in which God is perfectly honoured; since we can find in the world no other better life than that of the Christian, we must conclude that the Christian religion is the true religion, and that in it is found the true worship by which men are happily conducted to celestial blessedness.

Should it appear to anyone that it is an arduous and difficult thing to believe that Jesus Christ crucified is God and man, we say to him, Think in your conscience; for if this is an error, this faith and this belief would not be able to produce, to foment, to nourish and increase the Christian life, filled as it is with a perfection which elevates it above all other beliefs.

We see also that the Old and New Testaments, upon which we repose our faith, can only come from God, since the things which they contain in their predictions have been accomplished, and that their doctrine has produced in the world such great fruit of light and virtue. And truly if the faith were vain or false, would not its error appear to those who have a pure soul?—above all, to those who pray, when they meditate on Divine things? Besides, would the exterior worship render man more perfect in proportion as they use it with more zeal? and would this worship make the wicked worse when they use it irreverently, if the faith were false? Certainly if the faith were false, so would it not be the cause of such joy, such peace, such liberty in the heart and understanding of men, so that they find even affliction sweet, agreeable, and delightful.

This pure piety would not be seen depicted on their faces so simply—it would not make them venerable to all the world, nor would it give them the mysterious power to draw men to the piety and holy life of Christians.

If we consider the power that Jesus Christ has employed to surmount so many gods, emperors, kings, tyrants, philosophers, and heretics; to subjugate, without arms,

without riches, without help of human wisdom, so many barbarous nations; if we represent to ourselves the faith, constancy, and firmness of so many saints martyred for the Christian faith; the admirable wisdom used by Jesus Christ to illuminate in so short a time the whole world with the splendours of truth, and to purify it from the pollution of so many crimes and errors; if we add to all this, the consideration of His immense kindness, by means of which He has attracted to His love an infinite number of men, who, not content with despising perishable things, have wished to suffer death rather than yield a single iota of their faith—we shall be compelled to confess the divinity of Christianity. What man, what God, other than Jesus Christ, has ever accomplished anything like it?

Now, if Jesus Christ has done all these things without miracle, it is the greatest of all miracles; and if He has accomplished them by miracles His religion is Divine.

After this, if we consider with attention the doctrine of Christ, we shall find in it nothing contrary to reason—for the mystery of the Trinity, which it confesses, is itself imprinted upon creatures in figure and in life: it is, besides, reasonable to believe that God has created all things, since it is necessary to admit an efficient cause. Still more: man being destined to happiness, we justly believe in the justification and glorification of souls; and that the soul, by a natural inclination which impels it to unite itself with the body, desiring, naturally, to be reunited with it; the faith admits, therefore, the resurrection of the body.

We maintain, also, that the Incarnation, possible to the

power of God, was especially useful, and even necessary to the illumination and conduct of men, to show them the true road to felicity, and to fully satisfy the justice of God the Father for the sins of men. Then, with right, the Son of God wished to be born of a virgin, to die on the cross, in order to pay our debts, and to prove, by His example, that it is not necessary to fear death when the justice of God and the salvation of souls are concerned. In fine, Jesus Christ rose also to confirm us in the hope of the resurrection, and has been constituted the Judge of the living and the dead, because He had been condemned unjustly to death by wicked judges. Therefore, the Christian faith contains nothing repugnant to reason.

As to that which is called morality and discipline, Christianity is not less safe nor less reasonable, since the life it proposes and ordains is the most perfect of all, and there is nothing unreasonable nor absurd in the ceremonies of the Church. Certainly, the holy life which comes from the devout observation of these ceremonials, sufficiently proves it. What religion, then, in the world, can be established on such solid foundations?

The philosophers did not sufficiently comprehend the true end of life; the astrologers lost themselves in the midst of a thousand superstitions; the idolaters had no truth nor modesty; the Jews are confounded by their own prophets and by the captivity to which they are now reduced; the heretics bear in their many divisions the proof of their errors; Mahometanism falls before the attack of a simple philosophy; Christianity alone remains, confirmed

and ratified by the double power and double light of nature and grace—by the holy life of Christians—by wisdom, works, and miracles, which nourish the mind: therefore it is Divine. What man will not embrace that religion? Who will attack it without folly? Approved by God, preserved through so many centuries, maintained in spite of persecutions, sealed by the blood of martyrs: yes, that faith is Divine! If, then, we have not lost all our understanding, we must believe that the faith of Jesus Christ is the true faith; that there is another life where we shall appear in person before the tribunal of that formidable Judge, who will place the wicked on His left hand, in torments, like impure goats, and the good on His right hand, in felicity, like sacred sheep, and will give them the privilege of seeing God face to face—God Triune and One, immense, ineffable—in whom the saints will eternally possess all blessedness, by the grace of the invincible and triumphant Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom be honour, power, empire, and glory, through ages of ages. Amen.

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